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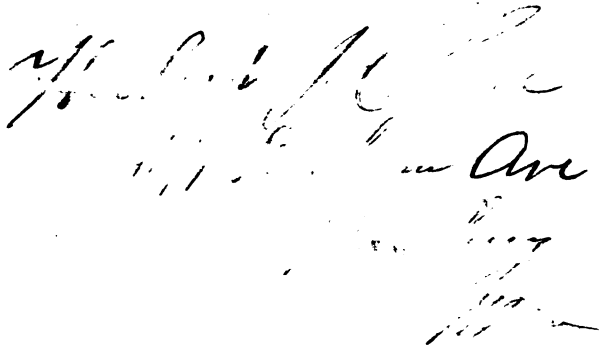

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FLORENCE RUTLEDGE [illegible]

NEW YORK
THE H. K. FLY COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

THE VICTORY

OF

ALLAN RUTLEDGE

A TALE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

BY

ALEXANDER CORKEY

PHOTOGRAVURE ILLUSTRATIONS BY

FLORENCE RUTLEDGE WILDE

NEW YORK
THE H. K. FLY COMPANY
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DEDICATED TO

JOSEPH NEWTON HALLOCK, D.D.,

EDITOR OF

THE CHRISTIAN WORK AND EVANGELIST,

WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT AND ASSISTANCE

MADE THIS BOOK POSSIBLE

PREFACE

In our American literature the wonderful Middle West has been strangely neglected. Few books portray the intensely interesting drama of life that is being enacted on the fertile plains of the Mississippi and Missouri Valleys.

My book is an humble contribution to the long and noble list of American fiction which describes our modern American life. My only claim to notice is that I have endeavored to picture the throbbing life of this world in the Middle West, where the nations of Europe are mingling to form one of the grandest types of humanity ever seen on the face of our globe.

This tale of the Middle West is the result of many years of observation and grows out of vital personal experiences as my own life is being lived in this favored part of the United States.

As a student, a business man, a minister, a professor, and a lecturer, I have had wide opportunities of knowing the varied experiences which go to make up the common life of the corn-belt.

PREFACE

If my story shall be able to show, in part, at least, the magnificent progress and the splendid possibilities of the great Mississippi valley, I shall feel repaid for all my labor in gathering the material and in writing my "Tale of the Middle West."

ALEXANDER CORKEY.

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CHAPTER I.

WELLINGTON'S TRAGEDY.

"For God's sake, come quick, doctor!"

A boy of fifteen or sixteen years of age was standing, bare-headed and breathless, one warm July day, at the door of the parsonage in Wellington, as he gasped out these words to Rev. Dr. Anning. The white-haired pastor was at the door, having hurried from his study to answer the loud rapping of the excited youth.

"What's the matter, Frank, what's the matter?" hastily inquired the minister.

"Viola's dead. She's been killed," said the boy, and, bursting into tears, he ran down the street in the direction of his home near the railroad tracks.

"Dead!" echoed the minster, gazing in astonishment after the fleeing form of the boy. "Dead!" he repeated, and then he went on speaking to himself: "Poor girl, I must hurry down to the home. Alas! I fear the worst."

He seized his hat and walked rapidly toward the little Bohemian settlement on the edge of Wellington. Wellington was a typical city of the Middle West, a county seat, with a mixed population, including Americans from the Eastern

States and foreigners from Sweden, Germany, France and Bohemia.

Most of the Bohemians were utterly godless, but one family, the Antols, had been reached by the church of which Dr. Anning was pastor. The two children, Viola and Frank, had been members of the Sunday school for some years, and Dr. Anning had often reflected that a start had been made through this family in the Christianizing and Americanizing of these Bohemian immigrants. Viola was just past eighteen, a lovely girl of much promise. She was now a member of the church choir as well as the Sunday school.

The word her brother had brought him of Viola's violent death stunned the minister like a blow. He had seen her pass that very morning in the bloom of health. As he neared the Antol cottage, it was evident something tragic had happened. A crowd was standing around, awe-struck and silent. Cries of grief came from within the house.

The crowd, mostly Bohemians, silently made way for the aged minister, whom all recognized. Many of them had only curses for the church of which Dr. Anning was pastor, and for the religion which he professed, but all had a respect for this good, white-haired man, who had shown himself a friend to all in trouble for many years.

Dr. Anning knocked gently, and then opened the door himself and entered.

The room was half full of weeping women, who motioned him to the door of the bedroom.

Just as he reached the door, the doctor came

out. "She's dead," said the physician to the minister. "She has been dead over an hour. They found her alongside the railroad track at the bend in the woods, with a revolver at her side and a bullet in her brain."

"Saviour, help me!" groaned the good man in his heart, as he came in, and sat down quietly in a vacant chair beside the bed.

The father, with bowed head, was moaning in helpless agony. The mother sat gazing in stony grief at the silent form that lay on the bed. The doctor had just covered it with a sheet. Already a crimson stain over the face showed the dreadful cause of all the grief and agony. On the floor lay Frank, Viola's brother, his strong, young form convulsed with sobs. Dr. Anning sat in silence for a few moments, not knowing what it was best for him to do.

Suddenly the mother gave a shriek and threw herself on the bed, crying in the Bohemian tongue: Viola, Viola, my child, Viola; come back, come back!"

In the paroxysm of her grief she pulled the sheet from her daughter's blood-stained face. Tears flowed down Dr. Anning's cheeks, as he gently raised the hapless mother from the bed and led her to another room.

"Mr. Antol," he said to the stricken father, "go and comfort your wife. Let us care for Viola."

The man rose as in a dream, and Dr. Anning led him out also. A woman came in and took out the sobbing boy.

When Dr. Anning returned to the bedroom, he

stood for a moment gazing down at the beautiful face of Viola, stained with her life-blood. He drew up the sheet again, and murmured to himself: "My God is this all the church has done for Viola?" What he meant only he himself understood. The unutterable pain in his heart was not simply because a young life had been taken out of the world. A horrible feeling that it was association with his church that was accountable for this awful crime made him sick at heart.

The coroner soon arrived and made a hasty examination.

"We will hold an inquest this evening," he said to the minister, in a matter-of-fact tone. "I shall have the city physician, Dr. Lucas, make a complete examination at once."

Dr. Lucas came, and after a half hour's examination of poor Viola's body he came out of the room, looking very serious.

Dr. Anning, who had remained until now at the home, put on his hat, and accompanied the physician down the street.

"Dr. Lucas," said the minister, "were there any other wounds or bruises on the body?"

"No, Dr. Anning," said the doctor, who was a close friend of the minister's and an officer of his church. "No but something was wrong. I am shocked beyond expression. I always thought Viola was a good, pure girl, but evidently she went astray."

Dr. Anning staggered and would have fallen, had not his companion grasped his arm.

"I am afraid it was suicide," continued Dr. Lu-

cas, thinking the minister had merely stumbled, and not noticing the pallor of his face. "She could not have hidden her shame much longer."

"It was not suicide!" exclaimed the aged minister, so fiercely that the doctor started. "It was not suicide. That pure, innocent child has been betrayed and murdered."

"I am grieved and shocked beyond measure," replied the physician, thinking the awful tragedy had unnerved his pastor. Dr. Lucas was a faithful member of the church and a devout Christian. "Of course," he went on, "I know that, under the surface of our quiet society in Wellington, much evil exists, undreamt of by the world. My profession enables me to see constantly the downfall of our young people through ignorance and unrestrained passion, but Viola—I never could have suspected Viola—she was so sincere, so gentle, so innocent"

The minister said no more. He could not trust himself to speak. He was afraid he had said too much already.

A little farther on they separated and Dr. Anning walked slowly back to his parsonage. "I knew it, I knew it," he said to himself. "That cursed hypocrite is at the bottom of it all. But I am helpless. I have no absolute proof. Even if I had, it would wreck our church if I exposed him. I must preserve the peace and harmony of Christ's church. God forgive me!" he cried in his agony, "is it Christ's church? But for our church that girl would be alive and happy to-day."

Dr. Anning was not the only one who had sus-

picions in regard to Viola's fate. A young man had been paying some attention to her who was believed by some to know something about the tragedy. This young man was Frederick Markley, the leader of the church choir, and the son of the leading officer in the Wellington church. Young Markley's father, William Markley, had been an officer in the church for over thirty years. He was a hard, grasping, covetous man, and had few friends, but he was a power in the Wellington church. He was a pioneer in that part of Iowa, and had used all his superior knowledge and education to grind as much money as he could out of the foreigners who had settled around Wellington. These foreigners came from Germany, France, Sweden, Bohemia, and other European countries. They came in large numbers to find a new home in the great Western land.

Markley looked on these immigrants, ignorant of American customs, as his lawful prey, and he had amassed a fortune through his dealings with them. He used all kinds of methods. He was in the land business; he loaned money; he had a store. Lately, he had become a manufacturer and employed many hands, nearly all foreigners.

His Christianity was shown in his attendance at the morning service in the Wellington church every Sunday, and in his contribution to the minister's salary. Apart from these two things, he might as soon have been judged a Mohammedan, or Jew, or even an Atheist, as a Christian.

He was an officer in the church, but he ignored the duties of this office until some attempt was

made to depart from the old formal, antiquated methods of church work. Then he became active long enough to effectually stop any such enterprise.

Dr. Anning had meekly submitted to Markley's control, and so he had remained pastor of the Wellington church for many years; but as a factor in promoting true Christianity no one knew better than Dr. Anning that his church was a failure.

That fatal afternoon he saw his church was more than a failure. It was a moral cancer in the community. Through association with his church a pure, innocent, foreign girl had been betrayed and murdered. Others might be suspicious, but he knew the damning secret.

Although the community regarded Frederick Markley as a fast young man, of loose morals, the church accepted him as one of its youthful leaders. He had charge of the choir. His influence over the young people of the church was paramount. Among the students of Wellington College he was regarded as a hero.

Poor Dr. Anning knew that this influence of his in the church and college was largely used to lead the young people into doubtful habits. Markley was an inveterate card player, and it was rumored he gambled heavily. He arranged a dance at the college every month, and often these dances were reported to be altogether too free for a Christian college. No one denied that he drank freely.

Dr. Anning often thought of making a protest against this young man's leadership in the church,

but he knew such a protest would mean a war with the senior Markley, and so, for the peace and harmony of the church, he endured in silence.

Dr. Anning had seen young Markley's attentions to the beautiful young Bohemian, and, knowing Markley's character, he had trembled for Viola. Just the week before, Dr. Anning happened to be in the officers' room of the church one evening after supper. It was choir practise night, but fully an hour before the time when the choir assembled. The minister was astonished, therefore, to hear footsteps and voices in the church. He recognized Viola's voice at once, with its slight Bohemian accent.

"Frederick," she was saying, "I am beginning to think you are deceiving me. Unless you keep your promise, I must, I will, tell Dr. Anning."

"If you do I will kill you," he heard Markley hiss.

It was Dr. Anning's first thought at the time to open the door and confront the young people, and how he wished he had done so, as he thought of it all afterward. But he thought of the elder Markley; he thought of the peace and harmony of the church, and he kept still.

The young people passed on to the choir room, and Dr. Anning was left with an awful secret on his soul.

Through a little hole the interior of a vast building can be easily seen. By one small act a man's character can be disclosed. So, through these few sentences Dr. Anning saw, clear as day, the tragedy of Viola's life.

After coming from the sight of Viola's murdered body Dr. Anning felt he must speak out. What Dr. Lucas told him about the unfortunate girl made him grind his teeth in rage. But again he thought of the peace of the church. Again he resolved to be silent.

At the inquest, which was short, few new facts were elicited. None had seen anyone accompany the girl down the track. The revolver belonged to Mr. Antol, although he declared he had not seen it in the house for some months. A verdict of suicide while temporarily insane was given, and the incident was closed.

At the funeral many noticed how strangely Dr. Anning acted. He did not seem himself. At first it was thought that his grief for the sad fate of one of his young church members had unnerved him. But, as the days and weeks went by, it was apparent to all that Dr. Anning was a broken man. In his pulpit he was like a man in a dream, and sometimes his utterances were almost unintelligible.

His guilty silence kept the church in peace and harmony, but it kept his soul in awful turmoil day and night. Sleep fled. His reason faltered. A few weeks after Viola's funeral Dr. Anning tottered into his grave, bearing his awful secret with him.

Some of the community suspected young Markley knew something of Viola's tragic end, but no one had any proof, and the talk about him died out. Viola was forgotten. Her wrongs were unavenged. Frederick Markley became more dissi-

pated than ever. The young people of Wellington became more reckless.

But One above knew well the secret that Dr. Anning had refused to disclose, and strange things were yet to happen in Wellington.

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW MINISTER ARRIVES.

Three months after Dr. Anning's death the fast train was rushing along through Illinois from Chicago to Omaha. These two mighty cities of the Middle West are united by a number of trunk lines which rush passengers from one city to the other during the daylight of a summer's day. There is no richer country in the world than these fertile prairies of Illinois and Iowa.

A young man sat in the luxurious palace car of the Limited and gazed out on the passing scenes. The fields were laden with the golden corn, for which the Middle West is famed. The modern farmhouses flew by. The train roared through little villages, without even hesitating. But the young man was not interested in the passing panorama. He was lost in deep meditation. A noble-looking youth, his age seemed about twenty-five, and with his coal-black hair, dark, piercing eyes and ruddy cheeks, he was a picture of health and strength. His brow was smooth and high. His appearance would have attracted attention in any crowd.

"Why, Mr. Rutledge, I thought it was you. Do you remember me?"

The young man started out of his day dream and came back quickly to earth. As he turned toward the aisle of the car to see who owned the sweet, musical voice which had addressed him, he gazed into the fair young face of a beautiful girl, with light flaxen hair and lustrous blue eyes. She was dressed in a brown traveling suit, in exquiste taste, and she had the carriage of a true young American woman.

"I am glad to see you again," responded the young man, after the first glance.

Rising from his seat, he shook her hand warmly. "Sit down, Miss Grayson," he continued. "Let me see? It is over four years since we last met in Des Moines. How did you remember me?"

"How did you remember me?" asked the young lady, in return.

"I could never forget you," said Allan Rutledge, for this was the young man's name.

Mabel Grayson blushed at Allan's earnest remark, and as the rosy hue of her cheeks deepened, and her blue eyes sparkled, she made a lovely picture.

"Where have you been all this time since your graduation?" she asked.

While these young people are renewing their acquaintance in this way, let us go back in their history a few years.

Four and a half years previous Allan Rutledge had graduated at Des Moines College. The lad was Iowa born and bred and he was proud of his native State. His parents had been pioneers and their home was on a large farm on the banks of

the Des Moines River. Allan had received all his general education in the Hawkeye State, as the natives term Iowa. On the morning of his graduation from college in Des Moines, Iowa's capital city, an event occurred that had an influence on Allan's entire career. He was approaching the hall in which the graduating exercises were to be held. A number of carriages and automobiles were concentrating on this same hall, bringing the college trustees and patrons to the exercises.

Judge Grayson, president of the board of trustees of the college, and his young daughter, Mabel, were approaching in a carriage. The driver was new and awkward and the horses high-spirited and excited. An automobile dashed past, the chauffeur tooting his horn wildly. The horses became frightened and began to back and rear. The coachman lost his self-control and pulled violently on the reins, only increasing the fright of the mettled steeds. An accident seemed imminent.

Like a flash the young graduate was in the road, and, leaping up, had grasped both horses by the bridles. It was a dangerous attempt, but in a trice the youth was master of the situation. He pulled the frightened animals to the ground, spoke gently to them and, at his word and touch, the panic left them.

Lifting his hat to Judge Grayson and his daughter, he disappeared in the crowd.

During the graduation exercises Allan sat on the platform with the rest of the class. He caught the eye of Miss Grayson, seated beside her father near the front, as he rose to deliver his oration.

His subject was "Self-mastery." He began with a quotation from Tennyson: "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, these three alone, lead life to sovereign power." His oration was a noble effort and held the vast audience spellbound. He closed with a quotation from Walter Foss:

"I see from my house by the side of the road,
By the side of the highway of life,
The men that press on with the ardor of hope
And the men that are faint in the strife.
And I turn not away from their smiles or their tears,
Both parts of an infinite plan.
Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man."

As he sat down, a hush crept over the audience for a brief second. Then a deafening roar of applause showed that Allan was the hero of the day.

Mabel Grayson whispered to her father: "That is the young man who caught our horses. I recognized him at once."

Thus it happened that at the close of the graduation exercises on that eventful day Allan almost lost his own self-mastery when Mabel Grayson came forward and said simply:

"Thank you, very much, Mr. Rutledge, for saving us from an accident this morning, and I want to congratulate you on your oration. It was splendid."

Allan blushed and stammered, as he answered, "Thank you, Miss Grayson. I did nothing. I am glad you were pleased with my oration."

The Judge also warmly thanked him and praised his oration as a masterpiece.

Allan Rutledge and Mabel Grayson had not met again until this morning, as both were journeying on the Limited Express from Chicago.

During these four years Allan had been preparing himself for his lifework as a minister of the Gospel by a three years' course at a Boston theological institution and a year's study in Germany.

He had just received a unanimous call to the Wellington church in Iowa, and he was on his way to Wellington that morning. Naturally he had been absorbed in deep thought, as it meant the real beginning of his lifework.

Mabel Grayson had also completed her studies, graduating from an Eastern college.

As Allan conversed with the happy, vivacious, cultured daughter of Judge Grayson, he threw off his heavy weight of care and his sense of coming responsibility. He did not mention Wellington to her at all. He told her of his European trip, of the places of interest which he had visited, and of the famous men he had met. Miss Grayson was delighted to hear of his travels, and sincerely interested in his studies for his sacred profession, as she was an earnest Christian girl.

The time passed rapidly. The great Mississippi, father of waters, was crossed, and the train rolled into the grand old State of Iowa.

"I am glad to be back in Iowa," said Allan, as he watched the cornfields fly past. "I have seen no land like it in all Europe."

"It is a grand State," said Miss Grayson. "I

was never ashamed at Mount Holyoke to tell the girls I was a native of Iowa."

"Yes," continued Allan, "I am anxious to make Iowa my home the rest of my life. My old home on the Des Moines River surpasses to me any palace I ever saw in the Old World."

"I am going to stop at Wellington to-day," said Miss Grayson. "I am to visit there for a few weeks with the Markleys, who are distant relatives of my father's."

"Wellington!" exclaimed Allan. "I am going to Wellington, too. I expect to live there awhile."

"To live there," said Mabel Grayson, in astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"I have been invited to become pastor of the Wellington Church and I have accepted," answered Allan.

"I congratulate you most sincerely," said the girl. "It is a splendid church. I knew Dr. Anning very well. He was often in our home in Des Moines. Poor man," she added, with a sigh, "he broke down suddenly. How glad papa will be to know you are his successor. He has often spoken of your graduating oration. He said you were a born 'friend to man.'"

"At least," answered Allan gallantly, "I am a friend to his daughter. I think I have heard of your relatives there, the Markleys. Some such name was among those signing my call."

"Yes," said Mabel, "uncle, as I call him, is one of the leaders in your church, but papa does not think he is a very religious man. His son is the

leader of the choir, but I have not been in Wellington for several years."

"Wellington the next stop," shouted the brakeman of the train.

The engine gave a long, shrill whistle, and the cars began to slow down, as the scattering houses on the outskirts of Wellington darted past.

Allan took Miss Grayson's baggage and his own and led the way to the platform. When he had placed the suit cases on the ground, he turned and gracefully assisted Miss Grayson to alight. As they stood together, they presented a striking appearance, and many turned to look, and to inquire who they were.

Tall, strong, manly and handsome, Allan looked every inch a man, while Miss Grayson's fair complexion, beautiful features and sparkling blue eyes made a charming picture of budding womanhood.

"How are you, my cousin," said a rich, deep voice; and both Allan and Miss Grayson turned and met a young man of Allan's own age. He was decidedly dark like Allan, but otherwise the two men were in marked contrast. There were marks of dissipation on the face of the newcomer, and his eyes had a hard, cynical expression. He was dressed in the height of fashion, but rather too loud to be in good taste.

"Why, Frederick, you have come to meet us," said Mabel Grayson pleasantly, and then turning to Allan, she introduced him to the stranger. "Mr. Rutledge," she said, "I want you to meet my cousin, Frederick Markley."

The young men looked at each other for a moment, as though each measured the other's strength, and then they shook hands without a word. There was no warmth in the greeting on either side.

Markley knew that Rutledge was the new pastor of the Wellington Church, but a minister was not a person held in high regard by him. Because he was a preacher Markley felt a kind of contempt for Allan, but because he saw in him manliness and authority he could not but acknowledge his superiority.

Allan saw into Markley's character at a glance. The loud style of clothing, the cynical glance, the dissipated look, all proclaimed a young man void of character and principle. It seemed to Allan unfortunate that he should meet such a church member on his arrival at Wellington.

"Deacon Stanford is waiting for you in his carriage at the end of the depot," said Markley, at last, adding in a slighting tone of voice, "You're the new preacher, arn't you?"

"My name is Allan Rutledge," said Allan shortly.

He turned and cordially bade Mabel Grayson good-by.

As Markley saw the light in Mabel's eyes, as she followed Allan's manly form with her glance, he muttered under his breath: "Damn a preacher, anyhow."

Since Mr. Frederick Markley was the leading young man in the Wellington Church, and the director of its worship in praise, his reception of his

new pastor, Rev. Allan Rutledge, was not very auspicious for the future peace and harmony of the church. Anything at all likely to disturb these two prime essentials in a church, peace and harmony, would have caused Dr. Anning to hazard his very soul, but Allan Rutledge was a different type of minister. He had a passion in his soul, something for which he hungered and thirsted, but it was not a passion for merely peace and harmony. He believed the wisdom from above was "first pure—then peaceable." Like America's great war President, Allan Rutledge was ready to fight for righteousness, and fight for it even if it cost him his life.

When Allan reached the end of the station platform, he found Deacon Stanford, one of the officers of the church, awaiting him with a carriage. Introducing himself, Allan stepped into the vehicle and was soon passing over the newly paved streets of Wellington.

'We are glad you have come, Mr. Rutledge," said Deacon Stanford warmly, as they drove along. "We feel sure God has sent you among us."

The sincerity of his tone cheered Allan and helped to efface the discouragment which he felt after this brief meeting with Frederick Markley.

"I will do my duty in Wellington," said Allan quietly, "and I hope I shall be of real service to the church and to the community."

"You will," said the older man, in deep earnest. "I know you will do us all good. We need a revival of religion here and I am sure you can help us."

Allan's spirit began to rise, and soon he and Mr. Stanford were on intimate terms. Wellington's new minitser had come, but Wellington little realized at first what this would mean.

CHAPTER III.

IN MARKLEY'S FACTORY.

The whistle had just blown at the close of the noon hour and the men were hurrying to their places in Markley's factory. It was midwinter, just two months after Rev. Allan Rutledge arrived in Wellington.

The various farm implements which Markley manufactured had a wide sale in the agricultural States of Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and Nebraska, and the factory was a paying concern. It gave steady employment to the hands, but the larger share of the profits went into Markley's coffers. He was noted for paying the lowest possible wages. Most of his employees were foreigners, who were more docile than American workmen.

A group of men entered the paint shop on the second floor on this particular day. They were an interesting group from an ethic viewpoint, and presented one of the most fascinating sights to a student of America's destiny. In this paint shop, as in all our Church and State, educational and commercial life, various races were being blended into one American type,

"Time's noblest offspring and the last."

The foreman of this room in the factory was Robert McGregor, a sturdy Scotchman.

A German, Luther Schneider, was the head painter, who performed the work requiring special skill with the brush.

A little Dutchman, Jake Borner, was the second painter.

Pat McGinnis presided at the "dipping vat." This was a long tank, filled with paint, into which parts of implements were dipped, a quick and sure method of painting.

Two Bohemians completed the number of workmen in the room. One of these we recognize as our old friend, father of the unfortunate Viola, Mr. Antol. He is still sad looking, and the six months in which he had brooded over the tragic fate of his beautiful daughter had left their marks upon him. He and another countryman of his, Louis Antoine, were the "helpers."

They all spoke English, but most of them used the language with a strong foreign accent, which showed alien birth.

As they began work after the noonday hour, Louis Antoine, one of the Bohemian "helpers," was assisting the Irishman, Pat McGinnis, in dipping some cultivator irons in the paint tank. Antoine was a reader of infidel literature, and he had lately perused some Bohemian attacks on religion, which evidently had soured his temper. As the irons sank in the oozy paint, Antoine remarked:

"I would like to soak every priest on earth like that."

Pat looked up quickly at his companion, and see-

ing the bitter expression on his face, he held his own quick, Celtic temper in restraint, and asked:

"An' what have ye agin the priests?"

"Ach," said Antoine, "they are all liars and frauds."

"Jesus Christ was no fraud," said the Irishman, whose temper was fast becoming hot against the unbelieving Bohemian.

"Ach," said the unbeliever, "he was the worst curse the world ever saw, a poor fool bastard."

This was too much for the Christian Irishman. All the holdback straps in his nature gave way. He dropped the cultivator irons into the tank of paint, and landed a stunning blow on the surprised Bohemian's ear.

"Take that, ye ungodly blasphemer!" said the irate son of Erin. "Begorra, I'll dip your haythen mug in the paint meself."

In a moment the two men were clinching each other, and swaying backward and forward by the side of the big paint tank. It looked as though both of them would fall in. The other men left their work and watched the struggle.

The foreman, McGregor, had overheard the conversation and sympathized with the Irishman. Feeling sure Pat could punish the insolent Bohemian, he let the fight go on.

Out over the floor the two struggling champions of faith and unbelief worked their way. Antoine was a little heavier than the Irishman, but Pat had the stronger grip. Besides, Pat was fired with religious frenzy at the insult to his faith.

A wheel was lying on the floor and Pat forced

his antagonist upon it, and tripped him on its spokes. Both fell over the wheel with a resounding thud, but Antoine was underneath. Pat gripped his throat, like a bulldog, and began to pummel his fallen foe.

"Will ye tak' it back?" he was shouting. "Will ye tak' it back, bad scran to ye?"

"Let go," gasped Antoine, getting frightened at the Irishman's fury.

"Will you tak' it back?" again demanded Pat, releasing his hold a trifle.

"Yes; let me up," begged the Bohemian.

"Do ye promise never to spayke to me like you did agin?" said Erin's triumphant son.

"Yes; you're killing me. Let me up," answered the now fully conquered infidel.

"Do ye confess Christ was divine?" said Pat, in terrible earnest, pushing his victory to the limit.

"I do," meekly answered Antoine.

"I hav' a good notion to drown ye right now in the tank, and save your soul, before ye recant, ye haythen," said the champion of the faith.

"Let him up, McGinnis," said the foreman, McGregor, coming forward. "We all heard his promise and he won't insult your religion again."

Pat got up, and the foreman helped the prostrate and gasping Bohemian to his feet.

Mr. Antol took Antoine's place, as Pat's helper at the tank, and the work of the shop went on as usual.

The fight started a religious discussion among the men and arguments were getting warm. Fore-

man McGregor wanted no more religious wars that day, and so he intervened:

"No more of this talk now, boys," he said, in a good-natured way. "I'll tell you what you all do. Go down to church next Sunday morning and hear Rev. Allan Rutledge preach, and you can then talk intelligently on religion. Most of you haven't been to church in a dog's age."

McGregor was a faithful member of Allan's church, and he and Allan were already good friends.

"All right," they sang out, "we'll go."

"I will have a good seat reserved for the whole crowd," said the foreman.

"I used to go to church," said Antol, with a tear in his eye, "but I have not had the heart to go the last six months; but I'll go Sunday, if the rest go."

Even Antoine, urged by Antol, agreed to go and hear Allan.

Allan's fame as a preacher had already spread to the factory, and when the rest of the men heard of the agreement among the painters a number of them also planned to attend church the next Sunday.

As a result, on the following Sunday morning Rev. Allan Rutledge was surprised and pleased to see a crowd of men filling the front seats to the right of the pulpit.

He was at his best that morning. His text was: "Two men went up into the Temple to pray." He pictured the devotions of the Pharisee and the publican.

Never was the character of a formal Pharisee

more keenly dissected than was done in Allan's sermon. The Pharisee's pride, vanity, uncharitableness, lack of genuine piety and general emptiness were held up to scorn.

People could almost see the discredited Pharisee passing out, as Allan exclaimed:

"Good-by, old Pharisee, you come to church, but not to worship God. You pray, but your prayer is a mockery and an insult to heaven. You profess Christ, but in works you deny him. Good-by, sir, and would we could say good-by to you forever. You and your kind have cursed and blighted the Church of God in every age."

The workmen from Markley's factory glanced over in the direction of their employer's prominent seat, as the sermon proceeded, and many chuckled inwardly as they saw him wince and scowl.

Except the infidel, Antoine, who sat in sullen defiance, all the men from the paint shop and their fellow-employees were deeply interested.

After finishing his portrayal of the Pharisee, the preacher went on to speak of the publican. As he recited the story of the wanderer's return to God's house Allan's voice changed. His whole manner became tender and sympathetic.

There were tears in the eyes of some of his new hearers that morning, as Allan commented on the publican's prayer.

"God be merciful to you? Ah, yes, he will hear your cry. He would stop every harp in heaven to hear an earnest, heartfelt sob like yours. Come, my brother, give me your hand. We are all sinners, and all alike need the grace of God. Go

home justified, my brother," he concluded. "Go home rejoicing in the love of your heavenly Father. Go home and tell what wonderful things God has done for your soul."

A hush of reverence fell over the great congregation as Allan ceased. Like the people of Drumtochty, they felt "they had heard a message from the Lord."

The closing hymn was sung with peculiar fervor, and its familiar words had a fresh meaning to many. It was Charlotte Elliott's famous hymn:

> "Just as I am, without one plea,
> But that thy blood was shed for me,
> And that thou bidst me come to thee,
> O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

"What did you think of Mr. Rutledge's sermon yesterday," asked Foreman McGregor, as the men gathered for work at seven o'clock on Monday morning.

"Himmel," said the German, Schneider, "das vas fine. Py Chiminy, das vas fine."

"Makes von feller think," said Dutch Borner, "but it was shust fine, shust fine. Ve halluf sich a Dominine in Vellington never."

Patrick McGinnis was more enthusiastic than any. Antoine had not yet arrived, and so Pat delivered himself thus:

"I don't think the haythen Bohemian will have anything now to say agin the blissed Christ after that sarmint. Begorra, he preached like St. Patrick."

Antoine came in a little later, but made no remarks.

"He iss all right," said Antol quietly, as he dipped some plow handles into the tank.

"I say, boys," said McGregor, "if I invite Mr. Rutledge down here some noon, will you get back at half-past twelve from dinner, and get the rest of the men out to hear him?"

"Shure we will, that," exclaimed Pat McGinnis, "at once!"

Thus it came about that one evening Robert McGregor called on Allan and invited him to come down to the factory and address the men at the noon hour.

"Have you spoken to Mr. Markley about it, McGregor?" asked Allan.

"No," said he, hesitating a little, "I wish you would, sir."

"All right," said Allan. "I am sure he will be pleased to have me come. I will call and see him to-morrow evening."

Allan wanted to call at Markley's for another reason. He saw in the daily Wellington "Journal" of that evening that Mabel Grayson was visiting again at the Markley home on her way South for the rest of the winter. She was only to remain in Wellington a few days, and he was very anxious to see her.

When he called the next evening at the Markley mansion Mabel saw him come up on the brilliantly lit porch, and ran to the door to admit him, even before he knocked.

"Come in, Mr. Rutledge," she said gaily. "I

was expecting you to call and see me. I am glad you are looking so well after all the hard work you have done in the last two months."

Allan was the picture of health. He was a close student and a hard worker, but he knew the value of outdoor exercise. Vigorous pedestrian excursions in the woods around Wellington kept red corpuscles in his blood.

"Delighted to see you, Miss Grayson," said Allan. "I saw in the 'Journal' that you were in town again."

"Come into the parlor," said Mabel, leading the way.

Mr. William Markley greeted Allan with a handshake. Markley did not altogether like Allan's preaching, and some differences of opinion had already come up between them, but they were still friendly.

Between young Markley, however, and Allan there was already open hostility. Allan had insisted on appropriate Christmas exercises on the occasion of Christ's natal day.

The jolly revelry that Frederick Markley had introduced of late years into these exercises Allan frankly characterized as "heathen and pagan, fitter to commemorate the birth of Bacchus than of the holy Christ."

Markley was deeply offended, and threatened to give up the choir, but Allan had his way. As Allan entered the parlor that evening young Markley rose and, with a gruff "Good evening," stalked out of the room.

Mrs. Markley was a dignified society woman,

with a patronizing air, and she also bowed coldly to the young minister.

The daughter, Grace Markley, was Allan's sincere friend, and greeted him warmly.

After a while Allan introduced the subject of the invitation to the factory to address the men at the noon hour.

"Who gave you the invitation?" asked Markley, rather sharply.

Allan stared at him a moment, and then answered:

"The invitation came from the men themselves, but Robert McGregor brought it to me."

"I can't see why McGregor didn't see me first about the matter," said Markley, evidently much displeased.

Allan could now guess why McGregor had gotten him to see his employer.

"I don't think the Gospel of Christ will hurt your workmen," responded Allan, roused by Markley's manner.

"No, oh, no," said he, 'but I do not believe in mixing business and religion. We have Sunday for religion."

"I expected to go there at the noon hour," said Allan warmly. "I was not going to interfere in any way with the work of the men. I am astonished to see you, an officer in the church, object to such a proposition. It is no wonder the workingmen are estranged from the Church."

Mabel Grayson had been a most interested listener to the conversation, and as Allan finished, she broke in:

"Why, uncle, I think such a noonday service at the factory would be delightful. We have such services in the factories in Des Moines. Papa sometimes addresses them, and I have sung at such meetings several times. I would be glad to sing at your service at uncle's factory, Mr. Rutledge," she concluded, turning to the astonished Allan.

"Oh, won't that be nice, and I will go with you," chimed in Grace Markley.

Allan saw he had won the day and gave Mabel a look of gratitude, as he turned to the discomfited Markley, and said:

"It is all arranged. Rutledge and party will visit the factory day after to-morrow."

Mr. Markley had to submit as gracefully as he could, but Allan could see he did not think very highly of the enterprise.

When it was announced at the factory that Rev. Allan Rutledge would speak at the noon hour to the men, and that Miss Mabel Grayson, of Des Moines, would sing, the men were greatly interested.

The workers in the paint shop were a committee of arrangements, and at 12.30 on the appointed day the whole force of about 100 men were gathered in the shipping room. Some stood, some sat on boxes and barrels, some squatted on the floor, but it was an earnest, intelligent audience. Some of the men were newer immigrants from different parts of Europe, and could not understand English very well, but all were reverent and attentive.

Robert McGregor was master of ceremonies, ably assisted by Pat McGinnis.

"Kape quiet," said Pat to the men, in a stage whisper. "Here they come."

Allan was accompanied by Mabel Grayson and Grace Markley, but the elder Markley refused to come. No one remarked on his absence. His presence at such a meeting would have surprised the men. After a few words of kindly greeting, Allan introduced Miss Grayson.

With a clear, strong, soprano voice, Mabel sang the old familiar hymn:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is nigh.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last."

As the beautiful words floated over the audience of rough men, in their working clothes, the whole scene was transformed. A light beamed in the men's faces. A glory lit up the rude shipping room.

When the last notes of the hymn died away, Allan rose quietly to speak. Every man was intent to hear. There was absolute stillness. He began by thanking them for the invitation, and also for the attendance of so many at church on the previous Sabbath.

"I believe the Church and the workingmen ought to get closer together," Allan went on to

say. "The Lord Jesus was a workingman" (Pat nudged Antoine at this). "The Gospel is especially for the toilers of the world. No one needs Jesus more than you men do. Jesus has elevated labor. He has dignified work. The common people heard him gladly when he was on earth, and Christ's best friends to-day are among the working people. The Church stands for universal brotherhood, for justice between man and man, for the rights of humanity. Come into the Church, men, and make the Church your own. The Church needs you, and cannot accomplish its God-given task of uplifting the world until the breach between the Church and labor is healed.

"Our own American poet, Foss, had in him the spirit of a Christian and an American when he said:

" 'Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by,
The men that are good, and the men that are bad,
As good and as bad as I.

" 'I would not sit in the scorner's chair,
Or hurl the cynic's ban;
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.' "

He spoke only fifteen minutes, but he crowded every sentence with his message. When he ceased there was a momentary hush, and then the men broke out in loud cheers. Pat McGinnis

jumped on a box, waving his arms excitedly, and shouted:

"Three cheers for Rev. Allan Rutledge!"

The cheers were given with a will, and the rafters rang with shouts of Germans, Bohemians, Frenchmen, Hollanders, Scotch and Irishmen. The address of Allan had, for the moment, fused them into unity, for he touched the common chord of humanity and religion.

As Allan made his way out of the shipping room, a Bohemian, with tears rolling down his cheeks, put out his hand, and said brokenly: "Mr. Rutledge, I am Antol, Viola's father. Viola used to sing that hymn the lady sang. She——" But he could go no further, bursting into uncontrollable weeping.

"Yes, yes, my poor brother," said Allan, who had already called at the Antol home, "I know. May God help you."

"Viola——" began the man again, but tears choked his utterance and he turned away, his whole frame trembling with his sobs.

Pat McGinnis took him tenderly by one arm, and Louis Antoine took the other in silent sympathy, as they went up the stairs to the paint room.

CHAPTER IV.

A PUBLIC SALE ON AN IOWA FARM.

"Come out to my sale next Thursday, Mr. Rutledge," said Silas Stanford to the pastor at Wellington, one Sabbath morning, not long after the factory meeting.

Silas was a brother of Deacon Stanford. He had lived on his farm, seven miles from Wellington, from pioneer days, and was about to sell out his stock and farm machinery, preparatory to moving into town.

His son was soon to be married, and, as is customary with farmers in the Middle West when they get old, Silas Stanford was going to retire and turn over the farm to the young people.

"All right," said Allan heartily, "I will be glad to come. I hear you have some fine horses on your place and I want to get one for my father."

Wellington was a center for good horses in that country, and Allan's father had asked him to be on the lookout for a good draft animal.

The next Thursday morning Allan bundled himself up in a warm fur coat and heavy overshoes, and drove out with Deacon Stanford to the sale. It was a cold winter day. There was a heavy fall of snow on the ground and the thermometer was only a few degrees above zero.

A big crowd of men had gathered in the yard by the time they arrived, and many greeted Allan cordially, as a number of his church members were present. They were somewhat surprised to see him at a sale. Dr. Anning would no more have thought of going to a public sale than he would of attending a dog fight.

These public sales on the Western farms during the winter months are the great social gatherings for all the men of the neighborhood. The farmers generally gather about eleven o'clock and a free lunch is served to all. This lunch consists simply of hot coffee and sandwiches, though occasionally doughnuts, or cake, are added.

Allan looked with delight on the large gathering of strong, husky American citizens in Silas Stanford's yard that day. These men, or their fathers, hailed from almost every European country, but they were being rapidly fused into one new people.

The most wholesome phase of America's variegated life to-day is its farm life, especially in the Middle West.

On the fertile plains of the Mississippi and Missouri valleys the various nationalities mingle, intermarry, grow independent, and become the backbone of American institutions.

"Come into the house and get warm, Mr. Rutledge!" said Silas Stanford, coming forward to greet Allan. "Come right in! We want you to eat dinner with us inside."

Inside the commodious farmhouse there was as animated a scene as outside.

Mrs. Stanford, assisted by several neighbors, had prepared a dinner worthy of a "sale," and to this sumptuous repast all the relations and close friends were invited.

The auctioneer and the "clerk" of the sale (who kept record of all the buyers) also were part of the company. Allan and Deacon Stanford sat together at the table. Right opposite them was Billy Johnson, the auctioneer, a jovial character who had cried sales around Wellington for over twenty years.

"My stars," he ejaculated as Allan was introduced to him, "you're the first preacher I have seen at a sale in many a year."

"I came out to get some pointers from you, Mr. Johnson," said Allan laughingly. "I hear you can sell any old thing at your auction sales, while I have something valuable to give away, and I generally find few to accept it."

"Oh, I just keep the crowd good-natured and give them a little 'blarney' once in a while," said the auctioneer.

"That reminds me of an Irishman I met in the village of Blarney, when I was visiting Blarney Castle in Ireland last year," said Allan, who wished to break up the silence and restraint that his presence seemed to impose on most of those present at the dinner table.

"Tell us of the Irishman," said Billy Johnson at once; "Paddy's always the broth of a boy."

"Well, I asked this Irishman if he ever ate lettuce, as we were talking of garden herbs. 'No,' said he, 'I don't like lettuce, and I'm glad I don't

like it, for if I liked it I would eat it, and I just hate the stuff.'"

The company laughed heartily at this Irish joke, and the conversation brightened around the table. As the dinner proceeded and Mrs. Stanford brought on dish after dish of all kinds of tempting food, Allan did full justice to the meal. The cold drive had sharpened his appetite.

"My stars," said Billy Johnson at last, as he watched Allan enjoying his meal, as only a man with a hearty appetite can enjoy such a repast; "my stars, I wish I had a little piece of your appetite. I wouldn't want it all. It would be too expensive."

"I was brought up on an Iowa farm," answered Allan, "and I feel at home to-day. If the stuff for sale to-day disappears as fast as these victuals, you won't be long in getting through with the sale."

"The coffee and sandwiches outside have already disappeared," said the auctioneer, looking out of the window. "Let us hurry out to work. The crowd is waiting for us to begin."

Before starting the sale Billy Johnson mounted a wagon and made a little speech to the crowd. He told of Silas Stanford's good qualities, and how he was about to retire for a well earned rest in town. He urged all to bid lively, as a good sale helped a community and showed how enterprising they were.

"I see a preacher here," continued the auctioneer, turning to Allan, "and I must tell you a preacher story before I begin. Down South, be-

fore the war, a colored preacher was explaining about Moses crossing the Red Sea:

"'You see, bredren,' said he, 'it was like this. It was an awfu' cold night an' de Red Sea frooze over and, early in de mornin', de Isrilites went ober on de ice. Den de fool Egypshuns started arter dem, and de sun rose, and melt de ice, and de enemies of Gord were all drowned, 'cause de ice broke.' After the sermon one of his more educated hearers spoke to him about his explanation, and told him that his geography told him the Red Sea was near the equator, where it never froze ice at all. The colored preacher was highly indignant when his sermon was criticised in this way, and answered, 'Broder, you tinks yous knows it all, but I want to tell yous dat dis time dat I'm talkin' of was long befo' dey had any jogrefays and long befo' dere was any 'quator.'"

Allan laughed heartily with the crowd as the auctioneer finished his story, and then the serious work of the day began.

All the smaller articles were auctioned off first. These were quickly disposed of. Then came the farm machinery and wagons. Bidding was getting slow. Many of the farmers were talking loudly to one another.

Billy Johnson saw it was high time for him to attract attention again. This he did in an effective way.

"What's the matter?" he shouted, so that all began to listen; "what's the matter with you folks? Have you all gone to sleep? Wake up. You're credit as well as mine is at stake. I am bid two

dollars on this corn plow. Think of a good corn plow selling for two dollars. You fellows ought to be made to cultivate corn with a hoe. Wake up. What do I hear? Two dollars are bid. Who'll make it four?"

This little piece of ginger on the auctioneer's part put new life into the bidding.

"Four," cried a young farmer.

"I have four dollars for this corn plow," went on the indefatigable Billy; "who'll make it five?"

Some one raised the bid to five dollars.

"Now, who'll make it five and a half?" (Five and a half was bid.) "Are you done? All done? Bid six dollars, or I'll sell this fine twenty-dollar plow for five dollars and a half. Shame on you."

The bid was raised to six, then seven, then eight, and finally the plow was sold for twelve dollars.

When the hogs and cattle were put up interest in the sale quickened, and a big circle formed around the auctioneer. After the cattle were disposed of the horses were led out, last of all. This is by far the most interesting part of the sale, for, like the governors of ancient feasts, modern auctioneers at public sales keep the best to the last. A magnificent team of blacks were led out, amid a chorus of such remarks as "Two black beauties," "That's a dandy team," "Fine horses," "Hard to beat that pair."

Billy Johnson called for bids. Allan made up his mind that one of these black horses was just what his father wanted, but he disliked to break the team, as they were so well matched.

There was a horse buyer from a neighboring city

present, a big, burly fellow, and, as he looked the team over he asked, "Do we bid on one or both?"

"One man will surely want the pair," said the auctioneer evasively. "They are perfect mates. What do I hear?"

"I'll bid two hundred and fifty on this nearest horse," said the horse buyer. Of course he wanted the team, but he thought if he took them one at a time he could get them cheaper.

The auctioneer hesitated to accept the bid. Two hundred and fifty dollars was the full value of the animal, and at last Billy Johnson accepted the offer, saying, "I'll sell you one at a time, if you like."

No one raised the bid and the horse was "knocked down" to the horse buyer.

"What do I hear for this other horse. It is worth just as much," cried the auctioneer. "One hundred dollars," said the horse buyer. No one raised the bid. Then the auctioneer realized he had made a bad mistake in splitting the team. The farmers would not buy a single horse unless they could match it, as teams are used universally on Iowa farms. The horse buyer smiled in triumph. That was his trick, to get the one horse, and then bid in the other at his own price."

By hard work the auctioneer finally raised the bid to one hundred and fifty. There it stuck. Billy Johnson was in despair.

Allan had been an interested observer of the whole business from the start. He made up his mind to enter the list.

"One seventy-five." A pistol shot would not

have surprised the crowd more as Allan's voice rang out the bid.

"One eighty," said the horse buyer, with a frown.

"Two hundred," shouted Allan.

The crowd cheered. Interest was now at a high pitch. The farmers were craning their necks and watching the two bidders, as sports do the principals in a prize fight.

"Two ten," said the horse buyer, with an oath.

"Two twenty-five."

"Two thirty."

"Two hundred and fifty dollars." Allan's blood was up.

The horse buyer paused. That was the full value of the horse, and he knew it. Even at that price there was no profit in the team for him. But he needed the horse to match the one already bought. His trick had failed ignominiously.

"Two fifty-five," he growled.

"Two sixty." Allan snapped out his bid like the click of a revolver.

The horse buyer was furious. He could not afford to raise the bid, and he was angry at his defeat. Instead of getting a cheap team, as he figured, he had gotten only one horse at the full price.

"Are you done? All done?" cried the auctioneer. "Sold to Rev. Allan Rutledge for two hundred and sixty dollars."

"Good for the preacher!" some one shouted, and the men cheered. They had seen through the horse buyer's trick and they were glad to see Allan teach him a lesson.

As Allan was leading the horse away he passed beside the enraged horse buyer.

"——you, I made you pay for it anyway," muttered the big fellow, who evidently had been drinking some.

Allan's face flushed at the insult. His dark eyes gleamed, but he restrained himself and coolly said to a man beside him, "Hold this horse a minute, if you please." Givng the horse into the man's care he turned and faced the surprised horse buyer. "What did you say to me?" he demanded. The big fellow looked the athletic minister over, and decided that Allan could worst him in more ways than in buying a horse.

"Why, nothing," he answered in confusion. "I said you paid a big price for your bargain."

"Didn't I buy that horse straight?" asked Allan sternly.

"Why, of course," muttered the crest-fallen bully.

The crowd was leaving the auctioneer and gathering round the two disputants.

"Act like a gentleman after this when nobody has wronged you," was Allan's parting shot, as he took the halter of his horse.

The horse buyer slunk away amid the jeers of the crowd.

"That preacher is a man, all right," said a big, husky farmer, who looked like a grizzly bear in his fur coat and cap.

"That's our new minister over at Wellington," said one of Allan's country church members. "He

is the real article. Come over and hear him some Sunday."

"I haven't been in church since my father's funeral," said the farmer, "but I think I would like to hear a man like that preach."

As Allan drove home with Deacon Stanford the good deacon cheered his heart by repeating some of the kindly expressions in regard to Allan which he heard at the sale from the country members.

"They are all interested," said Deacon Stanford with an enthusiasm unusual for him. "I believe a great revival is coming to Wellington, and that you are God's chosen instrument, Mr. Rutledge."

"I am trying to do my duty as I see it," answered Allan simply. "I thank you for your cordial support of my ministry. I may make mistakes, but I am seeking with all my might to give out the message of the Christ as I find it in the New Testament. I have every confidence in its power to revive a community."

In the conversation that followed on the long drive back to Wellington, Deacon Stanford and the young preacher grew to understand each other in a way that, later on, was fortunate for both.

CHAPTER V.

GRACE MARKLEY.

"Don't cry, Mrs. Antol. You still have Frank and he will graduate this year from high school. He is the youngest boy in the graduating class, and the brightest, his teacher says."

"Oh, child, my heart's broke. Since Viola's death I've felt so strange I hardly know myself. Poor Antol is not the same, and even Frank has changed."

Mrs. Antol turned a tear-stained face, on which sorrow had set a deep mark, toward her young visitor as she spoke. Mrs. Antol was a Bohemian of better birth than her humble neighbors, and spoke English correctly, but with a strong, foreign accent.

This conversation took place in the Antol cottage one wintry afternoon, about eight months after that tragic day when the bleeding body of Viola Antol was carried home. The visitor who sought to cheer the desolate mother was Grace Markley.

It was no new thing for Grace to visit the Antol cottage. Ever since the tragedy in that humble home she had been a frequent visitor. Mr. Markley gave both his son and daughter a regular al-

lowance every month. The son squandered his in dissipation, but Grace carefully husbanded every dollar, and spent as much of it as possible in doing good.

Through her assistance Frank Antol was enabled to keep on at school that winter, and graduate with his class. Usually at his age the sons of the foreigners dropped out of school and went to work.

Grace had come that day especially to invite Mrs. Antol to attend church the next Sabbath, as Mr. Rutledge had announced that a series of Gospel meetings would begin that day, lasting for two weeks. This was a strange innovation in the methods of the Wellington Church, but the new pastor was not afraid to adopt new methods. He had urged all the members to advertise the meetings and to invite outsiders to attend.

Grace started out Monday afternoon to carry out the pastor's wishes and her first call was on Mrs. Antol, who had not attended church since Viola's death. When Grace broached the subject, it naturally turned the conversation to Viola, and the poor mother had broken down in grief.

"Mrs. Antol," said Grace, at last, "it is quite wrong for you to grieve as you do. You ought to cheer up Mr. Antol and Frank. No tears will bring Viola back. Prepare to meet her in a better world, and meanwhile do not neglect the living in grieving over the dead."

This argument seemed to touch the woman. "I don't suppose I have cheered Antol and Frank

much," she answered sadly. She always called her husband "Antol."

Grace Markley saw her advantage and pressed her case.

"Come out next Sabbath and bring them both with you. Mr. Rutledge will help you. I know he will."

"Antol speaks well of him. He never gets tired telling of the shop meeting and of the lady's singing, but it makes him cry to speak of it.

"Come out next Sunday," pleaded Grace. "Promise me you will."

The fair, sweet, unclouded face of the girl was a strange contrast to the dark, weary, sorrowful countenance of the elder woman.

"I'll come," said Mrs. Antol, at last. "I'll come for Frank's sake. He needs the church.

"Good!" cried Grace, clapping her hands. "Good! I will tell Mr. Rutledge and he will be pleased.

There was a knock at the door and Mrs. Antol opened it. There stood Rev. Allan Rutledge with a bundle of handbills. He offered one to Mrs. Antol, saying: "Here is a notice announcing our Gospel meetings in the Wellington Church. They begin next Sabbath evening. Come out if you can."

"She has just promised me to come," said Grace, coming forward with the least suspicion of a blush on her fair cheek.

"Good afternoon Miss Markley," said Allan cordially. "You are canvassing too, are you?"

"Come in and sit down for a moment," invited Mrs. Antol.

"Yes, come in," said Grace. "Mrs. Antol was just telling me that her husband never tires of telling about your wonderful shop meeting."

A shade passed over Allan's face, as he recalled the poor Bohemian's emotion after that meeting. He came in and sat down in silence.

"Are you taking bills around like a messenger boy?" asked Grace.

"Why not?" replied Allan. "I asked the members of the church to advertise the meetings and I must set a good example. Some of the members don't need my example, though I see," he added, looking at Grace with a smile.

"If all your church members were like Grace," said Mrs. Antol gently, "your church would be a wonderful blessing to Wellington."

"I know it," said Allan, with enthusiasm.

Grace blushed a deep crimson. Her nature was such that she "dreaded praise, not blame." She sought to turn the conversation into a new channel by asking the minister if he had ever called on Marjorie Steen.

"No, who is Marjorie Steen?" asked Allan.

"She is a poor little blind girl," answered Grace, "who lives in a shack across the railroad tracks. Her father is a drinking man and does not properly support the family, but Marjorie and her mother are nice people."

"That's like Miss Grace," put in Mrs. Antol. "She soon finds out those who need a little cheer in their lives. Heaven knows what would have

become of me if it had not been for you, Miss Grace." And once more the tears came to the poor woman's eyes.

"Oh, it is little I can do," said the girl. "I often think if I were a man I would be able to do something worth while for people, but perhaps if I were a man I would be as selfish as the rest."

"Are all men selfish, Miss Markley?" asked Allan seriously.

"No, not all," she answered, in a little confusion, "but most men seem to be. They look on their fellows as material for exploitation, instead of looking on them as brother men."

"I see," said Allan, "you have been thinking about sociological questions. But do not mistake, Miss Markley," he added earnestly, "you are doing a noble work for the needy in Wellington, grander than is possible for most men."

"I believe in removing the causes of so much misery as we see everywhere in the world," persisted the girl.

"Ah," said Allan gravely, "the causes of most misery lie deeper than you think. Do not despise your sphere of labor. A Man once deliberately chose such a life of ministry as yours, and history is proving he has shown how best to redeem the world."

Grace was silent. Allan had given a new current to her thoughts.

"I would like to see Marjorie Steen," continued Allan. "If you have time, I wish you would take me to see her this afternoon."

"I will be delighted!" Grace answered, and get-

ting on her wraps she accompanied Allan down the street.

The snow had begun to fall again, and was coming down in large, beautiful, feathery flakes as the young minister and Elder Markley's daughter walked toward the Steen "shack," as Grace called it.

This pitiful dwelling was across the railroad tracks, standing by itself on the outskirts of Wellington, as though banished from the presence of the respectable houses.

There was a deep cut on both sides of the railroad, as it passed through this section of the town, hiding the trains from view until they were almost upon the cross streets.

In ordinary weather the noise of an approaching train was clearly heard, and there was no danger, but that afternoon the falling snow dulled the roar of an approaching engine, and the wind carried the sound in an opposite direction.

As they neared the track, Grace stepped a little ahead, as though to hurry across, when suddenly a big mogul engine pushed its black nose into view, and, with a roar, bore down on the girl. Miss Markley was so surprised at the sudden danger that she was helpless to leap to safety. In another instant she would have been hurled in the air, but, quick as thought, Allan reached out, grasped her, and pulled her back. She lay panting in his arms as the California Limited thundered past.

It was a narrow escape and Grace's face was white as the snow for a moment, while Allan

steadied her and offered his arm for support. But Grace quickly recovered herself.

"What a careless girl I am getting to be!" she exclaimed. "I endangered your life, Mr. Rutledge. I thank you for saving mine."

"It was a close call," said Allan. "I am glad I was able to catch you. Had we not better turn back? After such a shock you will not care to call at Steen's."

"Oh, yes; let us go in, of course," she answered. "We are right there, and I am all right again."

In a few moments both of them were inside the "shack." It was a poor hovel, of two small rooms, with rough, uncarpeted floors, and an appearance of general despair. There was no stove except the rusty looking cook stove in the wretched room used as kitchen, dining room and parlor. A bed almost filled the other room. As Allan looked around, one word came into his mind—"drink."

Allan was right. Drink had desolated the fortunes of the Steens. Even in prosperous Iowa drink made such a poverty stricken hut possible. August Steen, a sturdy Englishman, the father and husband, could have been a good provider for his family had it not been for his accursed love of liquor.

"How are you to-day, Marjorie?" said Grace pleasantly, as the mother led her little blind daughter, about eight or nine years old, toward her.

"I'm lonely," said the little one out of her darkness, as she groped with her hands to find Miss Markley's face.

Grace put out her arms and lifted her up. As

soon as Marjorie touched her cheek with her hand, she threw her arms around Grace's neck, kissing her several times.

"I am so glad you came to see me to-day. I get so lonesome," said the child. "Tell me a story, Miss Grace."

"I'll tell you a story another day, Marjorie, but to-day our minister, Mr. Rutledge, has called to see you."

"Where is he?" asked the child.

Allan rose and knelt in front of Miss Markley, saying: "Here I am, Marjorie. I want to be your friend. Kiss me, and I will tell you a story."

He took the child's hand and passed it over his cleanly shaven face. Then he placed it on his heavy locks of hair.

The little girl was silent, as though trying to learn who this stranger was who had come into her little, lonely, dark world. Allan dropped her hand, and she put it out again herself, and slowly passed it over his face. This seemed to fully assure her. She put her face forward and Allan kissed her cheek tenderly, as though it were that of his own child.

"I like you," said Marjorie to Allan. "Now, tell me a story."

"All right," said the minster.

He motioned Mrs. Steen to a seat and asked: "Doesn't Marjorie like singing?"

"Oh, yes," she answered. "I can sing. I know a song that Miss Grace taught me."

"Sing it to me," said Allan.

Marjorie slipped down from Grace's knee, and,

standing beside her, began, in a clear, sweet voice, the hymn so many children love:

Jesus wants me for a sunbeam,
To shine for him each day;
In every way try to please him,
At home, at school, at play.

"A sunbeam, a sunbeam,
Jesus wants me for a sunbeam,
A sunbeam a sunbeam,
I'll be a sunbeam for him."

As she sang, the strange mystery of sacred song again wrought its metamorphosis. The wretched kitchen in the old shack disappeared. It became a godly room. In the gathering shades of that winter evening it seemed to Allan that cherub faces hovered around the little singer. He felt himself in a sanctuary. A strain from "The Holy City" mingled with the song of the child:

"I heard the children singing, and ever as they sang,
Methought the voice of angels from heaven in answer rang."

There flashed through his mind also the words: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father."

"A long while ago, Marjorie," he began quietly, as soon as the little girl was again seated on Miss

Markley's knee, "when Jesus was on earth there was a blind man, sitting one day by the side of the road."

The poor little fellow-sufferer leaned forward intently, so as to hear all about the blind man.

"Jesus came along that way, and saw him and was very sorry for him, for Jesus was always sorry to see any affliction. So Jesus made up his mind to cure this blind man. He stopped in front of him and spat on the ground. Everybody wondered what Jesus was going to do. He soon showed them. He made a little plaster of mud, and put it on the man's eyes, and told him to go to a pool, called the Pool of Siloam, and wash off the mud, and that then his eyes would be all right. The man at once took his cane, and, using it to guide him, soon found his way to the pool. He stooped down at once and washed the mud from his eyes, as Jesus told him to do, and then looked up. He gave a shout of joy, for he found he was able to see. He was so glad, he went home singing, and shouting, and telling everybody Jesus had cured him."

When Allan had reached this part of the simple Gospel story, little Marjorie slipped down from Grace's knee, and walking in Allan's direction with outstretched hands, pleaded:

"Oh, sir, ask Jesus to cure me. I want to see so bad. Won't you ask Jesus to put mud on my eyes, so I can see?"

Allan stopped his story, put out his strong hands, and lifted the child in his arms. Placing her gently on his knee, he examined carefully her

eyes. As he looked, Grace watched him intently. A sudden joy leaped to his countenance. He gave a glad cry.

"Yes, my child," he said to Marjorie, "Jesus can open your eyes."

"Oh, I am so glad, I am so glad!'" said the blind child, throwing her arms around Allan's neck.

"It is only a cataract, I am sure," said Allan, answering Grace's wondering look. "There is an opacity of the crystalline lens, but I am sure the eye and optic nerve are all right. An operation will fully restore her sight."

"Can Marjorie be cured?" asked the mother eagerly.

"Has a physician ever examined her eyes?" asked Allan, anxious to make no mistake, and dreading lest he had inspired false hopes.

"No," said the poor mother; "we all thought she was hopelessly blind."

"Not at all," answered Allan. "It is only a cataract. I will telegraph to Des Moines to-night for Dr. Reuff, the eye specialist. It will be a simple operation. The doctor can be here to-morrow afternoon."

Before leaving Allan knelt on the rough pine floor and prayed. It was not the usual kind of praying, Grace thought. He simply talked to God, as a man talks to his friend. He asked the Presence which seemed to fill the lowly hut, to bless the father and mother, and open the eyes of the child.

It was only a sentence or two, but long after

he left there was a reverent hush on both mother and child.

"Was God here?" asked Marjorie, some time later.

"He was," answered the mother simply.

The next afternoon Dr. Reuff came, and Allan took him to the Steen cottage. Miss Markley also accompanied him.

With new hope in her heart the mother had mopped the floor, blackened the stove, put up fresh curtains at the windows, and with a woman's deft touch had transformed the hut.

After a careful examination, in which he corroborated Allan's diagnosis, Dr. Reuff performed skillfully the delicate operation. A cataract was removed from both eyes, and little Marjorie was able to see her mother's face and God's beautiful world. Only one glad, rapturous, wondering look was permitted that day, and then the eyes were bandaged up again.

A few days later, on Saturday afternoon, Allan called at the home. Marjorie met him at the door with a cry of joy.

"Oh, papa!" she shouted, bringing him in front of the big, burly Englishman. "Oh, papa, here is the man who asked Jesus to cure me!"

It was the first time Allan had ever met Mr. Steen.

"How are you!" he exclaimed heartily. "Little Marjorie can now see what a fine, big father she has."

"There's not much to see in me," groaned the

poor fellow, and Allan could see "remorse" written on his dejected face.

Allan at once understood.

"I don't know what's the matter with him," said Mrs. Steen, coming forward. "Yesterday, when I took the bandages off and he saw Marjorie could see, he was so glad he cried. After a while he became melancholy and last night he hardly slept all night. He won't eat, and he hasn't hardly been out of the house all day."

"Mr. Steen," said Allan, with a sudden inspiration, "come out to church to-morrow night. We begin our Gospel meetings. Come out and start life afresh for the sake of Marjorie."

"By God's help, I will!" answered the Englishman, as he grasped Allan's outstretched hand.

He rose to his feet, and as Allan's eye met his in the mutual confidence of man toward man the minister said:

"Mr. Steen, you can make a man of yourself yet. It is in you. I will look for you at church to-morrow night."

"I'll be there," said Steen, and he kept his word.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEGINNINGS OF OPPOSITION.

"Mary, we had an exciting time at our meeting last night," said Deacon Stanford to his wife one morning, not long after the day of his brother's public sale.

"Tell me about it, Samuel," said Mrs. Stanford. She was one of those whole-souled, elderly ladies, who, through their practical ways and devout spirits, help much to brighten and improve the world, though in a quiet, and often unappreciated, way.

She shared with her husband an ardent affection for Allan, and he often dropped in to take supper with them.

"We have turned Markley down at last," said her husband, with a twinkle in his eye, "but I am afraid he will make trouble for Mr. Rutledge. He has always ruled our church before."

The meeting Deacon Stanford referred to was a full meeting of all the officers of the Wellington Church, called by Allan to consider a "Forward Movement." At this meeting Allan proposed a series of Gospel meetings, a thing unheard of before in the church for a score of years.

"Tell me all about it, Samuel," repeated Mrs. Stanford, sitting down.

The Deacon began: "Well, we met at the church last night, as you know, and every officer was present. They seemed to surmise something important was going to happen. Mr. Rutledge called on me for a word of prayer, and then he explained the 'Forward Movement,' as he called it, and wanted to know if the officers were in favor of a series of Gospel meetings.

"Elder Markley was on his feet the moment Mr. Rutledge got through. 'I don't think, sir,' he said, 'that we need a 'Forward Movement' (there was a sneer in his voice as he said it). We have gone too far forward now. Our church is being turned into a regular Salvation Army.'

"'Ought not the church to seek to bring salvation to men, since Christ died to make salvation possible for all?' said our pastor, and I saw a gleam in his eye like fire. 'If the whole Church became an army of salvation, would not the world soon be saved?'

"'You are bringing too many fads into the church, Mr. Rutledge,' Markley answered gruffly.

"'I confess,' said he, 'I do believe in new methods in our church work if they are needed. I have been endeavoring to introduce effective ways of accomplishing things for God.'

"'That's just the trouble,' argued Markley, and we could all see he was getting angry. 'None of us feel at home in the church any more. You have made more changes in six months than Dr. Anning made in sixteen years.'

"'Mr. Markley,' answered Mr. Rutledge and I could see he was holding himself in restraint, 'I

noticed in your factory the other day some fine new lathes you have recently installed. You believe in keeping up with the times in the factory, but you think it is all right for God's church to become a back number.'

"'Religion and business are two different things,' snapped out Markley.

"'I notice some men,' said our pastor, in the quiet, impressive way that he uses sometimes, 'I notice some men who seem to think so. I believe, however, that the world would have more confidence in the honesty of such men if they would put a little more religion into their business life, and a little more business into their religious life.'

"'That's right,' chimed in Dr. Lucas. You know he is a warm friend to Mr. Rutledge. Before Markley could say any more our pastor spoke up: 'We are all officers of the church. Mr. Markley has given us his opinion. What do the rest of you think?'

"'I am against any changes in our old way of doing things,' wheezed out old Abe Daniels. It was the first church meeting he had attended in years. Old Abe is a good man, but he does just what Markley says and always has done so.

"'I'm heartily in favor of such meetings as our pastor proposes,' said I, getting on my feet. You ought to have seen Markley glare at me. It was the first time I ever crossed him in a church meeting. Dr. Anning was always so eager for the peace and harmony of the church that I often had to bite my tongue to keep still, but I didn't want to offend good, old Dr. Anning. This time I knew

I was right, and I went ahead and had my say. 'Yes,' says I, 'we need such meetings. Our young people need them. The time is ripe. I am sure they will be a success.'

"'So am I,' said one after the other, until it was evident every man was with our pastor except Markley and old Abe. Markley looked as if he had suddenly sat down on an icy sidewalk.

"'Someone make a motion,' said Mr. Rutledge.

"'I move we have special Gospel meetings, to be arranged for at once by our pastor,' said I.

"'I second the motion,' quickly responded Dr. Lucas.

"'All in favor say 'Aye,' said our pastor, and a chorus of hearty 'ayes' was heard. 'Those of a contrary opinion say 'No,' he went on. Markley and Old Abe eyed each other, but they knew it was hopeless to object, and they were silent.

"I could see Elder Markley took it hard; but, Mary, that was the best meeting the officers of the Wellington Church have had in twenty years. We'll see a big change in Wellington soon."

After getting his church officers behind him, as Deacon Stanford related to his wife, Allan went to work with energy, getting ready for the Gospel meetings.

Frederick Markley, much to his relief, refused to lead the singing, and a trained chorus leader, Professor Tilley, of Chicago, an old friend of Allan's, was engaged. Allan decided to preach himself during the two weeks of special services. He got out a huge quantity of handbills, which read as follows:

"A Fight
will begin against Unbelief, Ungodliness,
and every form of evil at the
Wellington Church,
next Sabbath evening, and continue for
two weeks.
Rev. Allan Rutledge will preach every
evening. Professor Tilley and an evangelistic chorus of fifty voices will lead the music of the campaign."

These bills he distributed far and wide in and around Wellington. He was distributing some of these very bills himself the day he met Grace Markley at the Antol cottage. He intrusted a number of the bills to Mr. McGregor, foreman in the paint shop of Markley's factory to be given out to all the men. McGregor engaged the Irishman, Pat McGinnis, to go around the shop one evening, just before quitting time, and hand a bill to every man. Pat described his work as an advertising agent to Mrs. McGinnis that evening at the supper table.

"Sarah," said he, after he had buttered a big slice of bread for about four or five of his younger children (Pat had an Irish family, even if he did live in Iowa), "I had a foine toime this evenin' a-helpin' the preacher."

"Helping the preacher?" echoed his spouse.

"Yes," went on Pat, "just a little before we quit to-night the foreman says to me, says he, 'Pat, go around and hand out these bills. Mr. Rutledge wants every man to get wan.' I tuk the bills and

read wan, and it said: A foight agin unbelafe an' ungodliness,' or something like that, but it meant Mr. Rutledge was going to preach every night for two weeks. As I was going around who should I meet but the boss himself, old Markley.

"'What are you doin', Pat?' says he; 'what are those bills about?'

"'It's a foight,' said I.

"'A foight?' he yelled; 'what do you mane handin' round bills for a foight, ye haythen?'

"'I'm no haythen,' says I; 'this foight is agin the devil,' and I handed him a bill. He read it over and looked cross as Job's turkey and said: 'That man Rutledge bates the divil.'

"'Shure, we all know he does,' says I 'an' his intention is to bate him.'

"'Does what?' said he, kind o' sharplike.

"'Bate the divil,' said I. 'What the divil are you talkin' about?' said the boss in a rage. 'Why,' says I, 'ye just said that Mr. Rutledge bate the divil, and I said that he intended to do it, and we fellows all think he's good and able to, glory be to God.' 'Pat,' said he, cooling down a little, 'they tell me ivery Irishman loikes a foight. How is it?' 'I have a friend called Mike, who is a great foighter,' says I. 'Tell me about Mike,' said the boss, for he loikes me Irish stories. 'It was loike this' said I. 'In the Spanish War after the battle of Santiago, Gineral Shafter met Mike and said, says he, 'Me foine fellow, and what did you do in the foight?" "Do," said Mike "may it plase your Honor, I walked up bouldly to a Spaniard, and cut off his feet." "Cut

off his feet?" said Gineral Shafter; "why did you not cut off his head?" "Ah, and faith, that was off already," said Mike.'"

"Pat McGinnis," said his better half reprovingly, "you shouldn't tell Mr. Markley such Irish stories at all, at all."

"Och," said Pat, "you ought to have heard the boss laugh. It put him in good humor agin, for he said, 'Pat, you're all right,' and walked on, and I gave a bill to every mother's son o' the men, and I asked them all to come out and hear Mr. Rutledge, and they'll come," added Pat, with assurance.

Mr. Markley was amused with the Irishman's joke, but he went home with bitter feelings against this new, upstart preacher, who was turning everything upside down in Wellington. He had just seated himself in a comfortable Morris chair, in his luxurious home, when Grace came in after calling at Steen's with Mr. Rutledge.

"Oh, papa," she said, as she came forward and kissed him; "I nearly had an accident this afternoon. I was crossing the track out near Steen's 'shack' and I did not hear the train, and was almost caught. Had it not been that Mr. Rutledge pulled me back I don't think I could have escaped."

"Rutledge," said her father; "what were you doing with Rutledge away in that part of town?"

"Oh, Grace thinks Rutledge is the only man in town," sneered her brother, Frederick, who was reading the afternoon paper in a chair in front of a grate fire.

Paying no heed to her brother's sneer, Grace answered her father: "We met by accident in the Antol cottage, and I was taking him to see little blind Marjorie."

At the mention of Antol's cottage Frederick Markley looked around suddenly. Then, throwing down his paper, he proceeded to leave the room.

"Grace," said her father severely, "you must stop this nonsense of running around among those beggars. That drunken Steen is a disgrace to Wellington. You can't help a man like that."

"I never see him at all," she answered; "I am trying to comfort poor Mrs. Steen and little Marjorie, and, oh, papa, Mr. Rutledge says Marjorie's eyes can be cured by an operation and she will be able to see. Dr. Reuff is coming from Des Moines to-morrow."

"Pshaw," said her father in a tone of disgust; "another wild notion of the fellow's. I sometimes think Rutledge is half-crazy."

"Papa," said his daughter with tears in her eyes, "how can you talk so about our minister? He spends his whole time in trying to do good."

"Preachers are a nuisance, anyway," he answered with a sneer, "especially when they set out to mind everybody's business except their own."

"The people of Wellington don't think so," said Grace with dignity. "Everyone I meet speaks in the highest terms of Mr. Rutledge and his ministry."

"Some are already sick and tired of him," responded Markley.

"Who are they?" inquired the girl promptly.

"I'm one of them," said her father fiercely, and he strode out of the room.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVIVAL.

The eventful Sabbath evening had arrived on which the much discussed fight between faith and unbelief was to begin at the Wellington Church. A vast congregation crowded every part of the capacious auditorium. Chairs were placed in the aisles, and these also were quickly filled. The attendance of men predominated over that of women. The students and professors of Wellington College were there in force. The business and professional men of the community were scattered among the audience. The workingmen were there almost to a man. Our old friends from the paint shop were seated well up in front. Foreman McGregor, Luther Schneider, Louis Antoine, Pat McGinnis and Jake Borner sat together. Mr. and Mrs. Antol and Frank Antol were in the center of the church, three pews from the front.

To the surprise of all Mr. Steen, perfectly sober, arrived early and made his way to a front seat. Elder Markley was nowhere to be seen, but Mrs. Markley sat in her accustomed place. Grace Markley was in the chorus, which occupied a temporary platform back of the pulpit. The chorus consisted of fifty voices, and Professor Tilley had

been drilling them for several days. The chorus director stood on the front of the platform beside Allan, as the great congregation rose and joined in singing, with the utmost enthusiasm, the opening hymn:

"Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before."

As Allan listened to the singing and gazed into the eager, upturned faces before him, he had no doubt of the issue of the fight. It was already a victory.

Just before Allan preached a popular hymn was sung, with this refrain:

"This is the message that I bring,
A message angels fain would sing;
'Oh, be ye reconciled.' Thus saith my Lord and King,
'Oh, be ye reconciled to God.'"

As this noble chorus rose from the vast throng Allan felt elated and glad. Never before did he so fully realize the grandeur of a preacher's vocation, and the pre-eminent importance of the message which every ambassador of Christ delivers to men.

As the last refrain died away in silence the audience sat in expectancy. Not a sound was heard. Every eye was fastened on the tall, athletic young man, who stepped to the front of the platform and faced the people. The flush of health was on his

cheek; his eyes sparkled with animation; every power of his body and mind seemed in perfect self-control. He was the living picture of a *man.*

"If thou knowest the gift of God." His voice rang out, clear and true, as he announced his text. "These words are found in the conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well." With a few graphic touches Allan pictured this historic scene. Then he went on: "Jesus came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Wherever he went the Son of Man had one cry for earth's sons and daughters:

"'Come home, come home, ye who are weary,
come home.
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home.'"

Allan's voice rang out like a trumpet.

"If you knew the gift of God, my people, you would then know the true value of men and women, no matter who they are. That black soot which defiles the snow is carbon, out of which, in the alchemy of nature, God makes the beauteous, lustrous diamonds. So these blots on humanity, whom we call the low and degraded, are after all human souls out of which, in the alchemy of grace, Christ can make his rarest jewels.

"This poor woman was of no account in Samaria, but Christ saw the human soul within, capable of restoration and of becoming a pure gem to sparkle in his crown forever. If you only knew the gift of God, you would appreciate what Christ means to the world. Alas!" he cried,

"alas, how few even in his church fully appreciate the Christ! He can take away sin and sorrow, and fear. He can give to all men confidence, hope and life. He can transform every soul and transfigure every home."

Grace was watching Mr. and Mrs. Antol. Their eyes never left Allan's face. They drank in every word. As Allan told of Christ's power to satisfy the soul and heal its sorrows, tears streamed down their cheeks. Grace knew that hereafter the Antol cottage would have a new peace and hope.

"If you only knew the gift of God," again cried the preacher, "and what this Water of Life means to the parched and thirsty men and women around you, O Christians, you could find no rest in your souls until you told everywhere the story of Jesus and his love.

"It was at Fredericksburg, after a bloody battle. Hundreds of Union soldiers lay wounded on the field. All night and all next day the space was swept by artillery from both armies but no one could venture to the relief of the dying men. All that time agonizing cries went up from the field for water, but men cried in vain. At last, a brave fellow in gray could endure the piteous cries no longer. 'General,' said Richard Kirkland to his commander, 'I can't stand it. Those poor fellows out there have been crying for water all night and all day, and I can't bear it any longer. I want to carry out water over the battlefield.' The General assured him it would mean instant death to expose himself on the field, but the young soldier begged so piteously that the General gave him leave.

"Provided with a supply of water, the brave soldier stepped over the rampart and started on his Christlike mission. Amid flying bullets and bursting shells he made his way to the nearest sufferer, and gently raised his head to give him the cooling drink. At once the Union soldiers understood his errand of mercy and for one hour and a half every gun was stilled, and Richard Kirkland went over that battlefield as an angel of mercy. He moistened parched lips, straightened cramped limbs, covered the dying with army coats, tenderly as a mother would cover her child.

"Will the soldier in gray brave death to give the water of earth to wounded men on the field of Fredericksburg, but no soldier of Christ will volunteer to go out on the battlefield of life and moisten parched lips with the Water of Life? Forbid it, Almighty God!"

Grace, from her vantage point in the chorus, looked at the audience. An unseen Presence seemed to brood over the listening throng. She saw Mr. Steen listen with intent gaze, as Allan told the story of the brave Richard Kirkland. The men from her father's factory were spellbound, hanging on the very lips of the preacher.

At the close of his sermon Allan made an unexpected appeal. It was like a flank attack and its success was complete. He had arranged with Grace Markley to bring little Marjorie Steen to the service. She sat with Grace, concealed among the chorus, until the close of the sermon.

Before concluding, Allan spoke of Christ as the Light of the world, as well as the Water of Life.

"As the glorious sun gives our earth light and warmth," he proclaimed, "so the Saviour of men enlightens all who come to him. Many of you have been stumbling in darkness. Is it not so?" he asked in tender tones.

"Follow Christ," he cried, "and your darkness is gone. 'He that followeth me,' says Jesus, 'shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.'"

He then told briefly the touching story of Marjorie Steen, and her recovery from her blindness. The audience was deeply moved when Allan finished by saying: "Marjorie is here to-night to bear witness to Jesus. She will sing to us an invitation hymn."

Led by Grace Markley, the little girl came forward. She was dressed in white, even to her little shoes. Her eyes blinked in astonishment at the great crowd, but, assisted by Grace, she began the hymn:

"The whole world was lost in darkness and sin,
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Like sunshine at noonday his glory shone in,
The Light of the world is Jesus."

As she sang the chorus, her voice rose in beautiful cadences until it filled the church. Not a word was lost. Marjorie had a remarkable voice for a child, as Grace Markley had soon discerned. It was a sweet, clear, birdlike, and yet rich and strong.

It was with strange and new emotions that the

audience listened to this sweet singer, lately in darkness and now rejoicing in the wonders of the light:

"Oh, come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee;
How sweetly the light has dawned upon me.
Once I was blind, but now I can see,
The Light of the world is Jesus."

When she reached the third verse of the hymn Marjorie had full confidence in herself. She sang without effort, like a bird. She forgot the audience. She was thinking of her joy in finding light, and of Jesus, whom, above all others, she thanked for the new found joy of seeing. Her singing melted hearts, like water, as she sang:

"Ye dwellers in darkness, with sin-blinded eyes,
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Go wash at his bidding, and light will arise,
The Light of the world is Jesus."

And once more the chorus rose:

"Oh, come to the Light; 'tis shining for thee;
How sweetly the Light has dawned upon me.
Once I was blind, but now I can see,
The Light of the world is Jesus."

Higher and higher rose the song waves of melody, until they seemed to reach a sunny shore and break.

Allan glanced at Mr. Steen. His head was

bowed in his hands. His frame was quivering with his intense emotion. There were few dry eyes in the church.

"The Light of the world is Jesus."

Tenderly the sweet voice of Marjorie lingered on the closing word.

As Grace Markley led her back among the chorus, Allan rose, and bowed his head in silent prayer. All seemed to be praying in their hearts.

"Our Father," Allan began, "help us to-night. We thank thee that Marjorie can see, but, oh, there are many here who cannot see the Light of the world. Help them to come to Him to-night. Help them to give up every sin and break with the past and start life afresh with Jesus. O Christ of God, we plead for the Water of Life to-night."

That was all, but it was enough. The Water of Life was flowing abundantly, and the thirst of weary years was being quenched. The chorus began to repeat softly the refrain:

"Oh, come to the Light, 'tis shinng for thee."

And they came.

The first man to come forward and grasp Allan's hand, in token of a new start in life, was Mr. Steen. With tears coursing down his cheeks, the big Englishman rose deliberately to his feet and walked to where Allan was standing in front of the platform. Then the Bohemian infidel, Louis Antoine, came forward. He was followed by the

Irishman, Pat McGinnis, by Luther Schneider, the German, by Jake Borner, and a number of others from the factory.

Young men began to stream up the aisles. Young women came also. From all parts of the church, and from the chorus they came. Old and young, rich and poor, American and foreigner, the banker and the factory hand, the lawyer and the school girl, the college student and the farmer, the business man and his clerks, all became one in Christ, as they dedicated their lives anew in the light of the vision of their Saviour. Mr. and Mrs. Antol and Frank came among the rest. Over one hundred and fifty crowded around the platform, and filled the entire vacant space in the front of the church.

At a sign from Allan all bowed in prayer, and in the hush that followed Allan said simply: "O God, we thank thee for what we have seen and heard."

The chorus, with the jubilant note of victory in their song, began:

"O happy day, that fixed my choice
On thee, my Saviour and my God,
Well may this glowing heart rejoice
And tell its raptures all abroad."

Grace Markley greeted Allan for a moment as he passed out, after the service had ended. "You have won a great victory, Mr. Rutledge," she said.

"It was not mine," he answered. "It was Christ's victory."

CHAPTER VIII.

FREDERICK MARKLEY CALLS ON MABEL GRAYSON.

"Come in, Cousin Frederick, I did not know you were in Des Moines."

"I came up for a few days on business, and, as I heard you had returned from the South earlier than you expected I could not help calling to see you."

Frederick Markley was standing at the door of Judge Grayson's stately mansion as he told this lie to Mabel Grayson. He had come to Des Moines to escape the Gospel meetings. After spending a few days among a fast set of his acquaintance in the capitol city of Iowa, he had merely called on his cousin for a diversion.

As young Markley looked at the Judge's fair daughter that morning, she was radiant with health and beauty. Blossoming into a most beautiful womanhood, it was no wonder her smile of welcome delighted such a man as Frederick Markley. He entered the home with a glad heart and Mabel took his hat and coat.

"Tell me about the wonderful meetings you are having in Wellington," began Mabel, as soon as they were seated in the parlor. "I had a letter from Grace to-day and she says she never saw anything like them."

"I left Wellington last Friday," said Markley, with the suspicion of a frown, "and I do not know what has been going on at home the past few days."

"Grace says that Mr. Rutledge has become a wonderful evangelist," went on Mabel, with enthusiasm. "I should have thought that you could not be spared from the choir during the special meetings."

"Oh, Rutledge has hired a fellow from Chicago to lead a big chorus for his meetings. He is turning everything upside down, to the disgust of my father."

Markley wanted to make a good impression on his cousin that morning, but the mention of Allan Rutledge's name was like a spark falling into gunpowder, and he could not help flaring up. Mabel did not understand his mood, but she was anxious to help Mr. Rutledge. She imagined that Frederick, like many sincere Christians, did not approve of evangelistic methods, and she desired to assist in the work at Wellington by winning him over to Allan's program.

Accordingly, she changed the conversation, since she saw she was annoying him, and they chatted pleasantly on congenial subjects. As he was leaving, Mabel invited him to come back to dinner that evening.

"We are to have a distinguished guest at our dinner party to-night," she said. "William Jennings Bryan is to be here. He lectures to-night, you know, at the Auditorium, and papa is to introduce him. Come and meet Mr. Bryan," she

urged, "and we will go together to hear his lecture. I came back from the South to be here on this occasion, so as to meet and hear him."

Young Markley was delighted with the prospect of meeting the famous Bryan, and also congratulated himself on the reception Mabel had given him.

"By Jove!" he said to himself, as he went down the steps with his fair cousin's "Good-by" ringing in his ears, "Mabel is a fine girl. She gets prettier every day. I'll have a good try for her myself."

That evening Frederick Markley was a guest at the Judge's home, and was introduced to Mr. Bryan and some of the most prominent men of the State, who had come to Des Moines to hear the far-famed Nebraskan speak, and had been invited to meet him at Judge Grayson's dinner party.

Mr. Bryan delighted the company with his genial manners and lively conversation. After a while the talk drifted to religious subjects, and Mabel was much interested in Mr. Bryan's quaint way of setting forth his belief in God.

"I am a farmer now, you know, Judge Grayson," said the great political leader, "and I get a great many lessons out on my farm. I found a hen's egg the other day and I began to reason about it. I said to myself, "Inside this egg is an invisible something that can make within the shell a little chick, with legs, feathers and a complete body. Surely to explain that egg I need a God."

After the dinner the company repaired to the large Auditorium, of which Des Moines is justly

proud, where Mr. Bryan delivered his celebrated lecture, "The Prince of Peace."

The immense space of the Auditorium was thronged when they arrived. The enthusiastic audience was composed of the cream of all Iowa, for many had come long distances to be present. It was a thrilling sight to look upon the cosmopolitan audience, that represented a new race in the world, "time's noblest offspring, and the last." Judge Grayson introduced the speaker of the evening in a few well chosen words, referring to Mr. Bryan as "the most distinguished private citizen in America."

The lecture was an eloquent discourse on religion, and a noble tribute to Christ, whom he called the "Prince of Peace."

Mabel sat beside young Markley in one of the boxes. Her companion did not seem to take much interest in the lecture, but Mabel was thrilled as she heard one of America's foremost men declare so fervently his faith in Christ.

Again and again the Auditorium rang with applause. Some of his humorous sallies called forth laughter. He declared that if anyone believed he had sprung from the monkey, he was welcome to such a belief, "only," said the orator, "don't connect me with your family tree."

For the most part it was a serious discourse, almost a sermon; but he held the undivided attention of the vast throng for nearly two hours. With the earnestness of a prophet, the peerless orator, a product of the Middle West, closed with these words:

"Our faith should be even stronger than the faith of those who lived two thousand years ago, for we see our religion spreading and supplanting the philosophies and creeds of the Orient. As the Christian grows older he appreciates more and more the completeness with which Christ fills the requirements of the heart, and, grateful for the peace which he enjoys, and for the strength which he has received, he repeats the words of the great scholar, Sir William Jones:

"'Before thy mystic altar, heavenly Truth,
I kneel in manhood as I knelt in youth.
Thus let me kneel, till this dull form decay,
And life's last shade be brightened with thy ray.'"

When the speaker had ceased there was a momentary silence. Then the storm broke. The entire audience rose to their feet. They cheered and waved their handkerchiefs in enthusiastic approval, for the new American race was in profoundest sympathy with their orator in his highest tributes to the Prince of Peace. Mr. Bryan gracefully bowed his acknowledgements and the meeting closed.

Young Markley escorted Mabel Grayson to her home, and promised to call again on the following afternoon.

Next day he found Mabel awaiting him. She had received another letter from Grace Markley, telling of the continued success of the meetings, and of the large number who had already accepted the faith. "I only wish Frederick was here,"

wrote Grace. "I am sure the meetings would help him. As he is in Des Moines, and you will probably see him, tell him to hurry home. He is missing the best things that ever came to Wellington. The college, even, is aroused and a number of the students have decided for Christ." Mabel read this part of the letter to Markley, and urged him to return home at once.

"I have no confidence in Rutledge," said he, at last. "He could not do me any good."

"What!" exclaimed Mabel, "no confidence in your minister?" Her voice had in it such a tone of astonishment that Markley smiled at what he reckoned her simplicity.

"Ministers are a poor set, anyhow," he went on sneeringly.

"How you talk, Frederick Markley," said his cousin reprovingly; "you know better than that."

Markley was trying to discredit Mr. Rutledge in Mabel's eyes by sneering at Allan's profession, but he was on the wrong track, as he quickly found out.

"Nobody thinks much of a preacher nowadays," he went on, in the same sneering tone. "Business men have no use for them. They are only meddlers where they are not nuisances."

"Mr. Markley," said the girl, thoroughly aroused, "I refuse to listen to such language!"

Markley saw he had gone too far and he tried to interrupt her, but her blood was stirred and she went on with kindling eye: "Ministers are not what you represent them. They are the teachers of religion and the ambassadors of Christ. The

ministers of Des Moines are its most respected citizens. Papa thinks more of a good minister than he does of men in any other kind of business or profession. The ministry is the noblest calling on earth. The greatest men in history were preachers. What would our world be without its Wesleys, Luthers, Savonarolas and its Pauls. These men were all preachers. The Lord Jesus was a preacher, and you heard Mr. Bryan honor him last night as the highest of men, and the hope of the world. I am ashamed of you!"

Markley was confused. He had never seen his cousin so indignant. He was surprised to see such spirit in her. But her enthusiasm lighted her eyes with a new brilliancy and flushed her fair cheeks with added loveliness. Markley was lost in admiration for her beauty, and coveted such a girl for himself.

He quickly regained his composure, and sought to retrieve himself. "Yes," he answered, "I am like your father. I think a *good* minister is all right, but I don't call Rutledge a good minister."

This was a flank movement and caught Mabel at a disadvantage. She sought at first to defend Mr. Rutledge.

"I never heard the least word against him," she answered. "When he was here in college he carried off all the honors. Papa and I heard his graduating address, and papa said then that he was a young man with remarkable powers."

"Well," said Markley insinuatingly, "he is not turning out well in spite of all this talk about his

success at Wellington. I have heard my father and others express themselves."

"What's wrong with him?" demanded Mabel.

"He runs around after the girls too much to please the best people in Wellington."

This was a master stroke of young Markley. It was even a better thrust than he knew.

Mabel had been receiving letters from Allan regularly ever since they had renewed acquaintance on the train, when Allan was on his way to Wellington. It is true the letters were always such as she could have read to her father without embarrassment. But, some way, Allan had seemed to belong to her, and the hints Grace Markley often gave of being in Allan's society had troubled Mabel. She had never put these thoughts into words, but there was a sub-conscious feeling that Allan had no right to spend so much time with Grace.

If anyone had accused her of such thoughts she would have resented the insinuation as absurd, but —the feeling was there. Markley's pointed remark found an open place in Mabel's armor. The color left her face. She stammered, as she tried to speak. A moment before she was like a Luther before the Diet of Worms, defying the world. Now she was like a wounded bird, seeking for shelter.

"W-h-a-a-t girls?" she stammered out in dismay.

Young Markley saw his advantage, and he determined to push it to the uttermost. He was able to do this more effectively because, like Napoleon, he had no moral code to bind him.

"He has had two or three sweethearts in Wellington already," young Markley went on, in a matter-of-fact tone, apparently not noticing the girl's confusion. "He wins their affection and then throws them off. He has started in lately with Grace, and has made a regular fool of her, but father has taken Rutledge's measure, and he is determined to get him out of Wellington just as soon as he can without too much scandal."

Poor Mabel! This fitted in with her own subconscious reasoning about Grace and Allan, and she never dreamed that Frederick Markley was inventing a base slander. But if Markley thought he was going to have a freer field if he succeeded in discrediting the minister at Wellington, he soon found out his mistake.

Mabel lost all interest in the conversation, and soon found an excuse to bow him out. He had desired to take her that afternoon for a visit to the State Capitol building, and he had anticipated a delightful climb along with her to the top of the lofty dome, but Mabel absolutely refused to go, or even to promise to go at another time. As he departed, he felt that he had robbed Rutledge of an admirer, but he had secured nothing for himself in doing it.

Left alone Mabel hurried to her own room and threw herself on her bed in tears.

"Just think of it," she said to herself. "I have been writing to him every week, and he seemed so pleased to get my letters. When he heard I was coming North last week, he said he was anxious to see me again in Wellington. Oh, dear, I have

been so foolish," and Mabel gave way to a fresh burst of tears.

After a while she grew calmer. She recalled their friendship from that morning when he graduated. She thought of their ride together on the train. She tried to remember his letters. He had never given her any confidences. She had given him none. If Mr. Rutledge desired, why should he not seek the companionship of a girl like Grace Markley. They were suited for each other in every way.

She took out his last letter, which she had intended to answer the previous day had she not been interrupted by Frederick Markley's visit. As she read over the letter again full confidence in Allan, as a man, returned. He had been misunderstood. She had misunderstood him herself. She resolved to be on her guard. If Grace Markley and Allan were finding each other's society congenial, she would not interfere. She blushed as she recalled how tender her thoughts of Allan had been recently. She decided on desperate measures.

"I will not answer this last letter of his," she said to herself; "at least, not for a long time. I would not know how to write him now. Allan and I are merely friends, that's all."

But in carrying out her determination in regard to Allan Mabel Grayson had an unending battle with her heart, for a woman's heart is a strange mystery.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

The fight between faith and unbelief was over. It was Saturday afternoon, and Rev. Allan Rutledge was sitting in his study, thinking over the strenuous two weeks of Gospel meetings. He had closed these special services the evening before with a final meeting, in which all were jubilant with victory. Over three hundred new members were to be added to the church the next day as a result of the campaign.

"It was worth while," said the minister aloud, speaking to himself. "These meetings have strengthened my own faith in my message. Christianity, properly understood, is a mightier power than the Church suspects at present. Its force as a redemptive agency is just beginning to be realized."

The door bell rang, and Allan went downstairs, and found Frank Antol waiting to see him.

Allan led the way up to the study and then opened the conversation. "I am glad to see you, Frank," he said cordially. "We are to have a great day to-morrow. Over three hundred new members are to be received into our fellowship. Our church will be too small, I am afraid, to ac-

commodate the people. I am especially pleased that you and your parents are among the number coming forward."

"I called to see you about that, sir," responded Frank hesitatingly. "I am afraid I can't join the church."

"Why not?" asked Allan in surprise. "I was convinced you had decided the matter."

"There are some things which are not clear to me," said the boy.

"What's your difficulty?" Allan asked kindly.

"You have been talking of forgiveness for the past few evenings," answered the youth. "Do we have to forgive everybody?" Frank Antol looked at the minister straight in the face as he asked the question.

"Yes," said Allan decidedly, "absolutely everybody. No true follower of Christ can harbor an unforgiving spirit."

"Then I can't join the church," said the boy doggedly.

"Whom do you hate?" asked Allan in astonishment.

The boy was silent for a little while and then he began: "You know the sad story of my sister, of course. They all said it was suicide. I know better. She was betrayed and murdered, and *I hate her murderer*!"

As he spoke the last four words, his eyes flashed fire, and he hissed out the damning sentence between his teeth.

"What do you know about it?" Allan asked sym-

pathetically, as he drew his chair closer to young Antol.

"I have never told anyone before," responded the boy, "but I will tell you. The day after Viola's death I was in her room and I found this note." And Frank handed the minister a piece of paper.

Allan took it and read these words, written in a peculiar kind of handwriting: "Meet me to-day at two at the grove near the railroad bend. We will settle things."

"Ever since I found that" said the youth "I have been trying to find out whose writing it is. I am sure it is someone in Wellington. When I find out who wrote that note I shall kill him at once as I would a dog!"

"Frank! Frank! you ought not to talk that way!" said the minister reprovingly.

"Mr. Rutledge," went on the boy, with a growing earnestness, "you do not understand. Viola and I were everything to each other. We played together, we sang together, we studied together. I loved her as a brother never loved a sister before. Here is her picture," he added, handing Allan a little locket, opened. Allan gazed intently at the miniature photograph, and saw it was the face of a maiden possessed of rare beauty, somewhat resembling Frank, but far surpassing even his handsome features in her marvelous loveliness.

Allan sighed as he handed back the locket, but he said nothing.

"I knew something was wrong," the boy began again, "for weeks before it happened. I could see something was troubling her. I asked her, just a

week before her death, what it was. I thought at first she was going to tell me, but she said, 'No, Frank, not now. Some day you'll know. Trust me, brother, it is all right.' When I found that note I knew. I will find the man who wrote it, and I will kill him at sight! I carry a revolver with me all the time." As the boy said this, in an excited tone, he pulled out a wicked looking gun from his hip pocket.

Allan looked at him in surprise. He seemed like a different person from the quiet Frank Antol he had known. His face was flushed. His eyes were shining. The veins on his temples stood out like whipcords.

"You must not think of such a thing Frank Antol!" said Allan sternly. "You are at heart a murderer yourself to talk like that."

"Mr. Rutledge," said the boy rising, and beginning to walk up and down the room in his excitement, "you don't understand. Think what the accursed wretch has done to our home. We were happy; oh, so happy. There was not a happier home in Wellington than ours. Since then our home has been blasted. I have waked up many a night, and heard my poor mother praying to die. My father has aged a year every month since that awful day. I have heard him moan for a whole night through. My God," he almost shouted, so that Allan feared for his reason, "my God, if I found the destroyer of our home and did not kill him, I would go mad—mad, I tell you!"

Allan was silent. This Bohemian youth had the wild blood of his ancestors coursing his veins.

His wrongs had awakened the spirit of fury in his soul. Christian self-control seemed absurd in such a case. But Allan was patient. He waited until the boy's frenzy had spent itself.

In a little while Frank sat down again, and, bowing his head in his hands, gave way to a flood of tears. "We were so happy," he moaned. "My sister, my poor sister."

"Let me see that note again," said Allan calmly. He examined the writing carefully. The thought of Frederick Markley had flashed through his mind, but clearly the writing was not his. Allan well knew young Markley's plain, round handwriting, and could have easily recognized it. The writing on this note was peculiar, such as Allan had never seen before.

"After her death," continued the boy more calmly, "I ceased to believe in God. If I had believed in God, I should have hated him then. But Grace Markley and you have shown me the truth of religion. I would join the church, only I can never forgive my sister's murderer. It is impossible."

"Frank," asked Allan, "do you really believe in God?"

"I do," he answered firmly.

"Do you believe that God punishes the wicked?"

"I do."

"If God punishes them, isn't that enough? Is it right to punish a man twice? Is that just? God says, 'Vengeance is mine. I will repay.'"

"But," answered the boy, "are we to allow vile murderers to go free on earth. I cannot and will not believe it."

"Not at all," said Allan quickly. "Magistrates are God's appointment as a terror to evil-doers, and the magistrate does not bear the sword in vain. In America every crime is punished legally when a conviction is made. The law of our land hangs murderers."

"If I find my sister's murderer, what do you say I ought to do?" asked Frank, with a look of perplexity on his face.

"Use every lawful effort to convict him of his crime, and then the law will demand its penalty," answered the minister.

"But if God is just, can I not avenge myself?" asked the young Bohemian, the hot blood awakening his fury again.

"No," said Allan, in a decided tone, "the Christian cannot take the law into his own hands in America. He is neither a patriot or a Christian if he does so."

"I will have to go," said the youth mournfully, rising from his seat. "I cannot join the church. I know well I would kill my sister's murderer. I could not help it."

"Frank," said the minister quietly, "before you decide to deny Christ because he asks you to forgive your enemies let us kneel in prayer."

They both knelt and Allan said to God: "O God, we thank thee that thou are just. We thank thee that we know thou wilt repay. We do not need to avenge ourselves, for thou wilt revenge, O thou Avenger of every wicked deed. Judge the wicked, O God. Root them out of the land of the living. But save thy children. Save this boy. Save him

from his sin of unforgiveness. Help him to see Jesus on the cross, crying to thee on behalf of his murderers. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' O God, help Frank to pray, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Comfort his bleeding heart, and heal the broken spirits of his father and mother, for thou canst heal and thou canst save." As they rose slowly from their knees, Allan held out his hand to the boy.

"Frank," he said earnestly, "promise me you will pray over this, and then that you will do what is right, what a man ought to do. Will you promise?"

The boy hung his head and made no reply.

"Won't you promise me to do what you find to be right, for Viola's sake?" pleaded the minister.

"I will," at last the boy answered, and with a warm handclasp they separated.

"It will be a hard fight," said Allan to himself, as Frank went down the street toward the Antol cottage, "but I think Frank will play the man, and that I shall see him to-morrow."

The following day was a lovely Sabbath. The weather was cold, but clear and delightful. Long before the services began the streets leading to the Wellington Church were lined with people. It was a great day in Wellington.

The church was crowded to its utmost capacity. Among the hundreds who presented themselves for admission into the church, Allan noticed with joy Frank Antol. His face was pale, but there was a look of determination about his countenance, and

a glance of triumph in his eye that showed Allan clearly that the boy had gained the greatest of all victories—the victory over himself.

Later on Allan found out that the youth had sat up nearly all night, fighting out his battle. He read and reread the story of Christ on the cross. He read and reread Christ's plain teachings on forgiveness and at last, near the dawn of the day, he triumphed. Allan also saw Mr. and Mrs. Steen and little Marjorie, their faces shining with their new-found happiness. Over half the men in Markley's factory presented themselves.

There were also many of local prominence who confessed Christ that day. Among these were the president of the First National Bank and his cashier, many of the leading merchants, two of the leading physicans, and several ladies well known in Wellington society. A number of students from Wellington College and two of the professors also came forward, and a group of prosperous farmers and their wives from the surrounding country.

Of necessity, the majority were "common people," for, as Lincoln used to say, "God made more common people than he did any other kind." There were ten different nationalities represented in the number, but all gave the same confident, affirmative answer to Allan's question, "Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?"

It was a most impressive sight when the entire congregation, composed of such diverse elements, stood together at the close of the service and sang:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

Elder Markley was almost the only man who had a clouded face that day. At dinner he sneered at his daughter's enthusiasm and referred to the new members as "a nice mess to come into the Wellington Church." "Look at Steen," he exclaimed, "the drunken vagabond!"

"He *was* a drunken vagabond," said Grace, as gently as she could, "but now he is a brother Christian."

"Bosh!" was all the comment Elder Markley made to this remark.

But, apart from Markley, the entire congregation was jubilant. There was a spirit of intense joy in all the services of the day, and Allan preached with Pentecostal power.

"You will have to be careful, Mr. Rutledge, or all this success will turn your head," said Deacon Stanford, at the close of the evening service. "No minister in all Iowa has accomplished what you have in many a year."

"It is the Lord's doings," said Allan, "and it is marvelous in our eyes. Satan will take care that I am kept from pride the same as Paul was."

He spoke these last words lightly, but he remembered them afterward. Satan was attending strictly to his business in Wellington, as Allan soon found out.

CHAPTER X.

THE GAMBLING CLASS IN WELLINGTON COLLEGE.

When spring came Allan's father and mother paid him a brief visit. They came not only to see Allan, but also Allan's younger brother, Richard, who was now attending Wellington College.

The Middle West is strewn with colleges. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when these rich prairies were being settled by the pioneers, Henry Ward Beecher exclaimed: "Our own people, scarcely less nomadic than the tented Arab, scarcely less impetuous than the Goth and Hun, pour abroad along the Western wilderness in swarming millions, countless, with implements, with wealth of flocks and herds, and with a breadth and depth of civilization such as never emigrated before. They drive schools along with them, as shepherds drive flocks. They have herds of churches, academies, lyceums; and their religious and educational institutions go lowing along the Western plains as Jacob's herds lowed along the Syrian hills."

Wellington College was a typical Western institution of learning. It was founded under Christian influences and a Christian minister, Rev. Dr. Older, was now its president. He was assisted by

a well trained faculty, several of whom were members of the Wellington Church. The college had the reputation of being a high-class Christian school, but when Allan came to Wellington he was much disappointed in the religious and moral tone of the institution. Some of the faculty were seemingly altogether irreligious. President Older had been a close comrade of Dr. Anning and shared his views about easy-going methods in the church. When Allan began his aggressive work, President Older sided with Elder Markley. The feeling between Allan and the college was apparently more cordial after the Gospel meetings, as a large number of the students professed the Christian faith.

Like most of the Western colleges, Wellington College was largely dependent on the Christian people of the West for its financial support, and for this reason Allan thought the college ought to maintain a high Christian character.

Allan's brother lived in Wellington Hall, the young men's dormitory on the college campus. On account of his busy life as a pastor, Allan had not seen very much of his brother during the winter months. He was reminded of his duty to Dick, as he called his brother, when their parents visited them.

On leaving, Allan's mother congratulated him on his evident success, but added: "Don't overwork, my son. You are beginning to look worn. Run up to the farm for a few days occasionally. And don't forget about Dick. He needs your oversight. I am afraid he is getting into careless company."

The mother's eyes, quickened by love, had detected a little deterioration in her younger son.

"All right, mother," Allan answered; "I'll come to see you this summer, and, meanwhile, I'll look after Dick. There are some careless fellows among the students, I am sorry to say, but most of them are fine young men. Dick will be all right."

A few evenings later, as Allan was driving in from the country, although it was late, he decided to call on Dick at the college and have a visit with him.

He found Dick's room-mate alone in their room. The boy told him that Dick had been over at the college building all evening. As Allan walked over to the main college building, he saw that it was entirely dark, except one room in the semi-basement, used by the students for social purposes. He remembered afterward that he had noted how closely the curtains of the room were drawn, so that only one stray gleam revealed the presence of the light within. Thinking it was some class meeting, Allan went to the door of the room, but as he was about to knock he was astounded to hear his brother shout out: "Spades are trump!"

He stopped as though stunned, and was soon convinced from the talk that a number of the students were inside gambling. Besides his brother's voice, he recognized the voice of Frederick Markley also. Without thinking of what the result would be, but disgusted at finding such things possible in Wellington College, Allan opened the door and walked inside.

He found out afterward that at such meetings they always locked the door, but that evening, for some reason, it was overlooked. Allan stalked in before the astonished gamblers. Money and counting chips were piled on the table. Allan looked around and saw his brother, Frederick Markley, Professor Gilman (a member of the faculty) and some ten or eleven students.

Just as the astounded natives of San Salvador looked on Columbus as a visitor from another world, so the surprised gamblers stared speechless at Allan, as though they had seen a ghost. Markley was the first to recover himself; and, in a burst of rage at the intrusion, he exclaimed:

"What do you want, sir? This is no place for mushy-mouthed preachers, you damned hypocrite."

Markley was seated with his back to the newcomer, and he had turned around his head to hurl the insult in the minister's face. With one long step Allan was beside him. Before anyone realized what was going to happen, the minister had seized Markley by the coat collar, swung him out of his chair, dragged him to the door, and pitched him headlong into the hall.

Just one word, "cad," escaped Allan's lips as Markley disappeared from view. Shutting the door Allan calmly turned the key in the lock. The enraged Markley at first attacked the door furiously, but the stout oak panels easily resisted, and he retreated in ignominious defeat. The students were thoroughly frightened. Blank amazement

and fear were on every countenance. Allan towered above them like an avenging angel.

Controlling himself with an effort, Allan sat down in Markley's chair, and quietly asked: "Boys, how long has this been going on?"

Professor Gilman had now taken in the full meaning of the situation, and he became furious. As a dog in its mad chase after a rabbit will rush against a barb wire fence, to its serious hurt, so Professor Gilman, blinded by his anger, rushed against Allan.

"You damned nuisance of a preacher, we know enough to look after our own business here. What right have you in this room?"

For answer Allan seized him, in spite of his vigorous resistance, as a cat catches a kitten, and lifted him out of his chair with one hand, while he squirmed helplessly. Unlocking the door with his free hand, Allan gave him a pitch outside, and closed the door again with a bang. Relocking the door, he took out the key and put it in his pocket. The whole time it took to eject the two men was less than two minutes.

Allan again sat down calmly. He looked around the circle of crestfallen students in grief rather than anger. Before his steady gaze Dick Rutledge and all the students dropped their heads. Allan did not address his brother in particular, but, speaking to all, he began, after a painful silence:

"Boys, I found out this gambling class by accident. I knew nothing of it until five minutes ago or less. But I am glad I stumbled in here if I can convince you of your folly."

He noticed a look of defiance coming into the faces of some of the lads, and he went on:

"I didn't mean to interrupt any pleasure you were having, but listen, fellows! Have you been doing the manly thing in meeting here in this way to gamble?"

None of the students made any attempt to answer.

"If it is a manly thing you are doing," went on Allan, "why do you draw the curtains so closely when you are gambling? Why do you meet in such seclusion?"

"You well know"—Allan looked the boys in the face as he spoke—"if this is reported your parents will be ashamed of you, and the reputation of the college will be injured. Is it a manly thing to gamble when you are ashamed of it?" he asked again. As the boys still remained silent, the minister went on: "No, boys, you have been doing something that is unmanly, mean and sneaking, altogether unworthy of you. Listen to me! I want to help you. Gambling is no recreation for intelligent men such as you are. You have surely heard what Judge Catron, of the Supreme Court of the United States, said about it. 'Gambling,' he said, 'is a general evil, it leads to vicious inclinations, destruction of morals, abandonment of industry and honest employments, a loss of self-control and respect.' Judge Catron is right. Love of this vicious game has already robbed some of you of your self-respect and self-control, or you would not be here to-night."

The students were listening with attention. Not

a sound was heard, save Allan's quiet, distinct voice.

"But, fellows," he continued, in a gentler tone, "I do not want to upbraid you, but I do want to help you. Won't you all promise to give up this accursed game? I have seen the brightest go down on account of it. What do you say?"

The students were still silent. They seemed unable to speak.

"Fellows"—Allan's voice was low and tender now—"one of you boys has a mother that I know well would almost as soon see her son in his coffin as sitting at this table to-night. Won't you promise that this is your last indulgence in gambling?"

Big tears were falling over Dick Rutledge's cheek. The others were similarly affected.

"Mr. Rutledge"—a fine, clean-faced student, at last found his voice—"I give you my word of honor I am through."

"And I too," said one after another, until all had spoken.

"I know that you mean it," said Allan heartily. "Warn others against this unmanly and ruinous habit."

Allan arose to go. "Before I leave, boys," he said simply, "let us speak to God together."

The minister knelt down and the rest followed his example. There was a moment's silence, and then Allan said: "Our Father, thou hast heard this good promise. Help every man to keep it all through life as a sacred vow."

Allan arose again, and with a cheerful "Good-night, all!" he was off. The students looked at

each other for several minutes before anyone spoke. At last someone addressed Dick Rutledge: "Dick, your brother is a trump, sure enough."

"I am through with trumps from now on," answered Dick, with a grim smile, "but I will keep as close to Allan as I can. If he is my brother, I want to say that Allan always acts the man."

There was no signs of Frederick Markley or Professor Gilman around the building as the students separated. The gambling class in Wellington had adjourned sine die.

When Allan left the college that night he never intended to refer to this incident further, but strange things followed the sudden collapse of gambling in this Christian college. The first indication that Allan had in regard to the probable momentous results of his night visit to the college was a remark from Grace Markley a day or two later.

"What is this they are saying about your visit to the college the other night?" she asked him, as they happened to meet on the street.

"Who told you about my visit?" he inquired, in surprise.

"Why everybody is talking about it, Frederick says, and they are telling all kinds of stories. I knew they were not true."

"What stories are they telling, Miss Markley?" asked Allan hastily.

The girl blushed. She would not repeat to him the outrageous slanders she had heard from her brother's lips.

"They are foolish tales," she replied. "No one will believe them."

Allan was puzzled. What could it mean? His curiosity was satisfied that afternoon by a visit from Deacon Stanford. As he came in Allan could see from his face that something serious was on his mind.

"What's wrong?" asked the minister.

"Let us go up to the study," said the Deacon.

When they were seated in the study and the door was closed, the Deacon turned to Allan:

"Tell me about your visit to the college the other night."

Allan told him the whole story in detail.

"Humph!" ejaculated Deacon Stanford, "they are trying to make a big thing out of that. I suppose Professor Gilman and young Markley have started all the stories. They are telling around town how you interrupted a class meeting the other night, when you were under the influence of liquor, and that you insulted everybody, got into a fight, broke some furniture and acted like a madman."

"Ah, that's what Miss Markley referred to," said Allan. "I saw her to-day and she said there were slanderous tales going around about me."

"Yes," continued the Deacon, "Elder Markley came to me this morning with a long face and told me there must be some truth in the stories. 'Where there's smoke, there's fire,' he said, but I was as sure of your innocency of wrong-doing as I am that my name is Stanford."

"What ought I to do?" asked Allan, evidently disturbed.

"I don't know as I would do anything," answered the Deacon slowly. "The truth will soon come out. Go on as usual and pay no attention. Markley proposed that the officers meet and appoint a committee to investigate your conduct that night, but I sat right down on him."

Allan clenched his fist.

"What's the matter with Elder Markley, anyway, I wonder?" went on Deacon Stanford. "He can't speak a civil word about you any more."

"Well," said Allan, in an effort to relieve his mind, "it reminds me of a Texas story. Down in Texas a lot of cowboys were having a big dance one night. During the festivities a drunken fellow staggered into the dance room. The manager of the hall took him by the arm and led him gently to the door. The fellow appeared astonished at this treatment, and went back to find out what it meant. This time the manager roughly shoved him outside. Still the drunken Texan did not comprehend what was meant. He reeled into the hall for the third time. The manager seized him by the neck and pants, and hurled him into the middle of the street. When the fellow came to again, he looked toward the dance hall and shouted: 'You fellows can't fool me any more. I know now what you mean. You fellows don't want me.' I guess Elder Markley doesn't want me in Wellington, and that is all there is to it," added Allan.

"But the whole community wants you, Mr. Rutledge," said the Deacon. "Wellington was never so united on a minister before."

"I shall go on and do my duty, as I see it," said Allan.

"Did I ever tell you my life motto?" he asked, as the Deacon rose to leave.

"No, what is it?"

"It is Abraham Lincoln's motto," said Allan, and he repeated slowly the noble words of the martyred President: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right.'"

"God bless you, sir," said the good Deacon, shaking his hand warmly in farewell.

CHAPTER XI.

ALLAN STIRS UP A TEMPEST.

When Allan Rutledge was left alone after Deacon Stanford's visit, he reflected long on the unexpected turn that affairs had taken. He was naturally annoyed at the slanders against his fair name, but what provoked him most was the fact that Elder Markley had suggested the appointment of a committee to investigate his conduct. "The idea," said Allan to himself, "that I could be guilty of such conduct is preposterous. To appoint such a committee would be an admission on the part of my church officers that they suspect me, and thus give some credence to the ridiculous slanders." The more he thought about it, the more his blood boiled. He was a little wearied anyhow from the strain of the Gospel meetings, and his nerves were somewhat unstrung. Perhaps, if he had been in his usual health, with his nerves like steel wires, he would have laughed at the whole business. As it was, the overstrained nerves gave way. After unusual excitement of any kind, a reaction is sure to come. Caught in such a reaction the bold Elijah proved a craven, and quailed before Jezebel. In his discouragement he prayed for death, and yet fled from it in terror.

Allan fretted over the idle tales he had heard until they drove him to an extreme act, which he afterward regretted. He made up his mind to meet the slanders, and, taking up his pen, wrote out the following communication for the Wellington "Gazette":

"Editor, Wellington 'Gazette':

"Dear Sir: It is reported to me on reliable authority that slanderous tales are being told in regard to a visit which I made to Wellington College a few nights ago. As I wish to present the truth of the matter, just as it happened, I ask leave to state the following facts: I was returning home from a pastoral visit in the country last Tuesday evening, when I called at Wellington Hall on the college campus to see one of the students. I found out he was at the main college building. Going there I saw a light in one of the lower rooms, used generally for class meetings, and supposed I should find my friend at a class meeting. What was my surprise on approaching the door to hear loud talking, which I at once understood as the talk of men engaged in the game of gambling. I walked into the room, and found a gambling game in full progress. There were thirteen or fourteen in the room, all students of the college, except two, Frederick Markley and Professor Gilman. For good reasons I ejected these two men from the room and then talked with the students on the evils of gambling. All of them, without exception, promised me never to gamble again. Before I left I had a word of prayer with them. There was no fight. No furniture was

broken, and my meeting with the students was as quiet as a prayer meeting. In regard to the report that I was intoxicated, I may say my father was a total abstainer before I was born, and I have never touched liquor in my life. This is a full and accurate account of the whole affair, and I am ready at any time to make affidavit to that effect, if desired. Yours sincerely,

"Allan Rutledge.

"P. S.—I may assure the many friends of Wellington College that this gambling class has been discontinued since my visit."

Next morning Allan handed this communication to the editor of the Wellington "Gazette." Like all newspaper editors, he was delighted to get such a piece of "live copy," and he printed the article in a prominent place in the paper, which came out that evening.

In giving this communication to the press, Allan never dreamed of injuring the college. He felt that this plain statement of the facts in the case would clear the Wellington atmosphere of its fogs of slander against himself, and that there the matter would end. He realized that the mention of the names of Markley and Gilman in the article was extremely severe, but he felt justified in doing this, as he was convinced that they had deliberately lied about him, thinking that he would not defend himself, lest he injure the reputation of the college. But Allan was convinced that the truth cannot possibly injure anyone, or any institution, and after giving the statement to the "Gazette" he dismissed the matter from his mind.

The result of the appearance of Allan's letter in the evening paper was astounding, and no one was more amazed than Allan himself. The article was at once telegraphed all over Iowa and the surrounding States, and the next morning it appeared, with large headlines, in all the daily papers of the Middle West.

The headlines were mostly misleading, such as "A Minister Calls Wellington College a Gambling Hell," "Rev. Allan Rutledge Attacks Wellington College." One paper, with a large circulation, had this headline in heavy type: "Great Sensation in Wellington—Its College Called a Gambling Hell."

The success of Allan's Gospel meetings had won him quite a little fame over the State, but his statement about gambling in Wellington College made him at once the most-talked-of minister in the Middle West. The article was widely copied, and papers containing it were sent to Allan from all parts of the country.

Allan felt like a man who has unsuspectingly thrown a lighted match into what he supposed to be a barrel of sand, but found out, too late, it was a barrel of gunpowder. The shock of the explosion dazed and blinded him. But of one thing Allan was certain: He had spoken the truth in his public arraignment of the college, and he resolutely determined, with a fresh grip on himself, to meet the occasion like a man. He soon had need of all the reserve power in his manhood, as the wave of excitement he had stirred up soon became a raging tempest.

The college at once felt the effect of the expos-

ure. Parents wrote to President Older, inquiring if their sons were among the gamblers. Men who had supported the college financially declared that if Wellington College tolerated gambling they were through with it. Some students were actually withdrawn from the institution by their alarmed parents.

The college had always been Wellington's crowning glory, and this widespread attack on its reputation stirred up a storm of protest in Wellington against Allan's "lack of judgment," as they called it. At the head of these forces, antagonistic to the young minister, was Elder Markley. He was openly rejoiced at the turn affairs had taken, and now saw an excuse to drive Allan unceremoniously out of the community.

Accompanied by old Abe Daniels, Elder Markley called on Allan. The two church officers seated themselves in silence in the study. Allan waited for Mr. Markley to begin the conversation. After a number of preparatory coughs and hems, Elder Markley began:

"Mr. Rutledge, we have called to see you in regard to the article you have sent over the country slandering our college."

"Truth never slanders," said Allan.

"Sir," continued the church officer, as grave as a judge sentencing a criminal to death, "that was an awful thing for you to do."

"It was an awful thing, certainly, to teach the students of Wellington College how to gamble," rejoined the minister.

"There may be a lawsuit about this," went on the other.

"Yes," Allan responded, "gambling is an offense against the laws of the commonwealth of Iowa."

"What did you mention my son's name for?" asked Markley, getting angry at Allan's cool rejoinders.

"Because he was there, sir," said Allan.

"You have injured Wellington College throughout all the West," continued Markley, with a glare at the minister.

"I have certainly injured the gambling class at the college," Allan replied.

"Your usefulness in Wellington is finished," Markley said, with a sneer. "We shall expect you to resign as a result of this."

All this time old Abe Daniels had sat in silence, looking first at Allan and then at Markley.

At this point he wheezed out:

"Yes, we expect you to resign."

"We will see about that later," said Allan, rising, as though the interview were at an end. "Is there anything I can do for you to-day, gentlemen?" he asked.

"No," said Markley, in some confusion at Allan's move.

"Well, I am glad you called to see me," said Allan, bowing them out. "I hope you will come again some other day."

Before the two men knew just how it happened they were standing outside on the steps. In no gentle mood Markley went down the street. In spite of his boldness in facing Markley, Allan's

mind was in confusion. He hardly knew which way to turn. He had just learned that day that the faculty of the college had decided not to attend the Wellington Church as long as Allan was pastor. He felt like a man standing on quicksand. Every movement he made to extricate himself seemed to make his plight worse.

But one thing was still simple and plain: He could keep on doing his work as a minister of Christ in "comforting those that mourn." When Elder Markley and old Abe Daniels had gone that afternoon, he went out to make a call in a humble home on the outskirts of the city. A poor girl, daughter of a German widow, was lying at death's door from that dread disease that sweeps away so many lives—consumption. He had received an urgent invitation to call that day, although the girl was not a member of his church. He found the sufferer even worse than he supposed. When he entered the lowly home, a glance at the little group of neighbors whispering in sad tones told him that the grim reaper was about to harvest another of the precious, tender stalks of earth. As Allan entered the little bedroom he saw the widowed mother bending over her dying daughter.

At the sound of Allan's footsteps, the poor widow looked up and greeted the minister with a wan smile. Allan felt rebuked, as he looked at her, that he had allowed his own petty disappointments to grieve his soul when such weary hearts as this widow's needed cheer.

The girl opened her eyes and recognized him,

as he had called several times previously at Grace Markley's request. She made a faint motion beckoning him to her side, and, as he leaned over her, she gasped. "Read the Twenty-third Psalm and pray."

Allan sat down beside the bed and took out his pocket Bible which he always carried. He turned to the shepherd Psalm and began to read slowly:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."

"Yes," whispered the weary sufferer, "he leadeth me."

Allan went on again: "He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

"No evil," repeated the poor girl, with closed eyes. "No evil."

"For thou art with me," Allan read, "thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

"Yes, it's true," added the girl.

When Allan had finished the Psalm, the humble believer said:

"Thank God! thank God!"

The mother was weeping softly, sitting at the foot of the bed. The few neighbors stood around the door of the bedroom. It was too small to accommodate them all.

Before praying, Allan took a little hymn book out of his pocket, and began to sing a favorite hymn of his. He had a rich, well modulated, tenor voice, and in his softest tones he sang:

"Just beyond the River Jordan, just across its chilling tide,
There's a land of life eternal; through its vales sweet waters glide.
By the crystal river flowing grows the tree of life so fair,
Many loved ones wait our coming, in the Upper Garden there.
We shall meet them some bright morning,
Resting by the waters fair,
They are waiting for our coming,
In the Upper Garden there."

"Yes, I'll meet them. I see them now. The angels are coming. Good-by, mother, good-by." The girl was evidently on the dread border between the Seen and the Unseen World.

The mother hastened to raise her head. She made an effort as though to sit up, and then sank back, exhausted, whispering, "Good-by, good-by," and all was still.

After the first wild outburst of grief was over, Allan led the little company in prayer. His heart-cry to the Comforter of the comfortless made the little bedroom a gateway to the Unseen World, and his faith in Him who is the resurrection and the life made death itself the harbinger of life.

The stars were shining as he walked home, and, looking up, Allan repeated to himself Goethe's brave words:

"There eyes do regard you in Eternity's stillness,
There is all fullness, ye brave, to reward you:
Work and despair not."

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A LETTER FROM WELLINGTON.

"Here is a big letter for you, Mabel, from Wellington. Grace must have written you a regular book this time," said Judge Grayson one morning to his daughter, as he handed her a letter.

"I am very glad to get it," answered Mabel, eagerly reaching for the large envelope. "Grace has not written me for a long while and I am so anxious to hear from there."

"I understand young Rutledge is having a serious time on account of his clash with Wellington College," continued the Judge. "They are to bring the matter up at the Annual Church Convention, which meets in Des Moines next month. Mr. Markley has written me about it. He is very bitter against the minister."

"I think Mr. Rutledge was justified in condemning gambling among the students of a Christian college," responded Mabel.

"So do I, my daughter," said the Judge earnestly, "and I sympathize very much with Mr. Rutledge. As one of the trustees of our Des Moines College, I understand about these things. The trouble with Wellington College has been that they have allowed a few of the trustees to manage it,

and some of them are not even professing Christians. It is all a mistake. Mr. Rutledge will really do the college a world of good in the end, even if he did use extreme measures."

"I am glad to hear you say so, papa," answered Mabel. "I must run upstairs and read this letter from Grace Markley. She has evidently written me all the news this time."

When Mabel opened the letter and looked it over, it was like the manuscript of a book. There was page after page, until at last Mabel exclaimed to herself: "My, Grace must have a lot of news to tell me that is interesting if she found time to write a letter like this. I never got such a letter in my life before." The letter was dated, "Wellington, Iowa, July 6, 190-." "My Dearest Mabel," it began, "I am ashamed I have not written you for so long. I expect you have seen in the newspapers all about the trouble here between Mr. Rutledge and the college. We have had a perfectly dreadful time. Papa and Frederick are so bitter against our minister that mamma and I can't even mention his name in the house if they are present. I am sorry Mr. Rutledge named Frederick in the letter he wrote to the Wellington 'Gazette,' as Fred says he will never forgive him. Mr. Rutledge told me he regretted writing this letter that has stirred up so many against him, but at the time he was so worked up over some stories that were going around in regard to his visit to the college the night he found them gambling that he thought it was his duty to do it. He will do

anything he feels to be his duty, no matter what the result may be.

"For a few weeks everything was upside down. All the professors left the church, including President Older, and most of the students were highly offended at Mr. Rutledge. Many of our best people said very harsh things about him, and I was afraid our great work in the community was ruined. I never prayed so hard over anything before as I did over our church and minister at that time. But things are looking very different now. Several of the professors and nearly all of the students are back in the church again, and Lester Grey, one of the seniors, told me that Mr. Rutledge was now considered a kind of hero by all the boys.

"Mr. Rutledge suffered much during the strain of the first few weeks. He never mentioned the matter publicly, except once, the second Sabbath after it happened, when the feeling against him was at its height. He made a short prelude to his sermon, saying that it was utterly false that he was trying to injure Wellington College. He said he was seeking its welfare. He compared his attitude to Luther attacking the evils of the Christian church in Germany, and to Lincoln arraigning slavery in our own country.

"'Martin Luther,' he exclaimed, and I never saw him look so grand, 'was not the enemy of the Christian Church because he fought its errors. Abraham Lincoln was not the foe of America because he denounced slavery, which, like a viper, had fastened itself to our body politic. Luther

was the best friend the Christian Church had in his day, and Lincoln was America's most patriotic citizen. I, too, am a faithful friend of Wellington College, and I will continue to be so, no matter what may happen, for I believe in Christian education, and I stand for the Christian college, but I want it to be a Christian college in reality, and not in name only.'

"I shall never forget these words, nor the appearance of our minister as he spoke them. He seemed to tower above us all like a giant. Although it was in church, the great congregation applauded loudly, and from that time on Mr. Rutledge has been gaining ground every day. The whole church is now back of him, and I tell mamma that if only papa, Frederick, old Mr. Daniels, President Older and a few of the professors would let the matter drop all would go on as usual. But they say they are determined to drive him out of Wellington—a thing that the church will never permit.

"Another thing happened just then that turned the sympathy of the people to our minister. He was brutally attacked one night by two ruffians. Fortunately young Frank Antol, a son of the man who wept so at the shop meeting when you sang, came along. He is only a boy, but he is very strong, and he leaped on one of the fellows and bore him to the ground. Mr. Rutledge soon got the better of the other man, but if he had been alone I am afraid he might have been roughly handled. As it was, he received a blow on the face, and carried the mark for several days. This act

of his enemies has made him more popular than ever with the common people.

"The work of the church has gone on with as much enthusiasm as ever, and Mr. Rutledge never preached so well as now. All the new members are standing faithful and are even bringing in some more of their friends, so that our church membership is now the largest in the whole State of Iowa outside of Des Moines.

"We have several remarkable cases of transformed lives. A drunken fellow, called Steen, is now sober and industrious, and his home is so changed you could not tell it was the same family. His daughter is little Marjorie Steen, of whom I once wrote you. Professor Tilley, who has taken Frederick's place as chorister, says Marjorie has a remarkable voice, and he is sure she will make her mark as a singer. I have arranged with him to begin the training of her voice at once. Another case is that of a Bohemian infidel, Louis Antoine. He works in papa's factory, and was formerly a rough, profane man. Now he is one of Christ's best witnesses in Wellington.

"Mr. Rutledge conducts a large Bible class every Monday evening. About four hundred people attend it week after week, and they all bring their Bibles with them. It is a wonderful sight to see the number of men who attend. Many of the workmen in the factory are present regularly. One of them, an Irishman, called Pat McGinnis, often amuses the class. He is a real Irishman, always ready with an answer, warm-hearted and loyal. I think he would gladly die for Mr. Rutledge's sake,

if necessary. Last Monday evening Mr. Rutledge asked the class what was meant by an 'unclean spirit,' and before anyone could answer Mr. McGinnis shouted out: 'Shure, your rivirince, doesn't that means a 'dhurty divil.' At another time the question was asked, 'What was Peter's chief failing?' and Pat replied at once: 'He was loike an Irishman. His brains were at the back of his head, an' he was always a spakin' first, and then thinkin' about it, afterward.'

"When he refers to Timothy he calls him 'the broth o' a bhoy.' We had a great celebration here on the Fourth. It was a Glorious Fourth in Wellington. Senator Dolliver was the orator of the day, and as Mr. Rutledge had met him previously he was honored by being invited to ride in the carriage with the Senator to the park, and afterward he introduced Mr. Dolliver to the big crowd. Mr. Rutledge is to give an address on 'International Peace' at our Chautauqua, and I wish you could be here then.

"At commencement time President Older and the college professors treated Mr. Rutledge very shabbily, everyone said. They had the graduation exercises at the Academy of Music, instead of the church, as usual, and Mr. Rutledge was not invited to take any part at all, much to the disgust of the students and the whole community. I was talking yesterday to our minister, and I told him he was looking pale and worn out. I urged him to take a few weeks' rest before our Chautauqua begins. He told me he was going to run up to his father's farm on the Des Moines River for a three weeks'

vacation, and he certainly needs it. He leaves next Monday, and I hope he will get a good rest.

"Now, dear Mabel, I have written you all this because I thought you would like to hear exactly how things are, as I know you are interested in Mr. Rutledge. He says he has not heard from you in a long time, and he wonders what is the matter. Write him a letter. He needs cheer and help now. He seems to think the world of you. Come and see us when you can and we will talk it all over, because I have more to tell you than I could write in a week.

"With much love, I am, your loving cousin,

"Grace Markley."

When Mabel Grayson had finished this long letter she sat thinking for several minutes. "Poor Allan!" at last she exclaimed aloud, speaking to herself. "I wish I could tell him how much I sympathize with him, but it is evident from this letter that Grace and he are very close friends. I must not allow myself to make trouble between them. Since Grace asks it I think I ought, perhaps, to write him a few lines of encouragement," she added pensively.

She began a letter to him that very morning, but when it was written it sounded so stiff and formal that she felt she could not send such a cold letter as that. Then she tried again, but the second attempt produced a letter so cordial and warm that she was afraid to send it. She tore both of the letters up and gave over trying to write to him that day. She finally wrote a note to Grace Markley, telling her she was much interested in

her letter, and that she would write Mr. Rutledge before long.

"I am just starting on a camping trip on the Des Moines River with a few friends," the letter concluded. "I wish you were to go with us, as we expect to have a jolly time."

"Poor Mr. Rutledge," said Grace to herself, when she read this note from Mabel, "I am afraid she does not care much for him, and I can plainly see he is deeply in love with her. I hope she will write him soon."

Grace Markley had not exaggerated the bitterness of Allan's enemies against him. Seeing that he was becoming even more popular than ever in Wellington, Elder Markley began writing to neighboring pastors about the "trouble between the church and the college," and assuring his brethren in the Lord that only the resignation of this "ill-balanced enthusiast, Mr. Rutledge," could again bring "peace and harmony" to the church of Wellington.

As Markley well knew, some of these pastors had been jealous of Allan's success, and they lent a ready ear to Markley's suggestions. Besides Markley was looked upon as the leading officer in the church. Accordingly the matter was to be brought up in the Annual Church Convention in Des Moines, as Judge Grayson had told his daughter. In case it desired to do so, this convention had the power to remove Allan from Wellington, in spite of the protests of the church, and Markley was sure he had influence enough with the ecclesiastical "machine" in Iowa to accomplish

this. He was aided in his schemes by President Older, who had a large influence in the State, and he used it all to discredit Wellington's minister. Allan knew of all this plotting, but he kept steadily on his way. He found Deacon Stanford a wise counselor and a true friend. The deacon informed him of all the plots of his enemies, but told him to "quietly wait the salvation of God."

"The people are with you to a man," assured the deacon, "and this is a country in which the people rule in Church and State. Let them bring this matter up in the convention, if they wish. I will be there, as well as Elder Markley. President Older and those professors are only digging their own graves. It will be your victory in the end, Mr. Rutledge."

Allan had also a needed stay in Grace Markley. In many ways she cheered him on, and there grew up between them a mutual understanding and confidence. It was stronger than ordinary friendship, but not deep enough to be called "love," unless it were the devoted love that sometimes exists between a brother and sister. Allan never dreamed of asking Grace to be his wife, nor did she regard him in any way, at that time, as a possible husband. But, in his lonely conflict in those awful, dreary weeks, when Mabel Grayson no longer wrote, when old friends became cool, when his way was dark, Allan found in Grace Markley the human sympathy for which the strongest crave, and in her gentle way she helped to heal his wounds and nerve his arm again for the battle of life.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE DES MOINES RIVER.

"Good-by, everybody!" shouted Allan Rutledge, as he stood on the rear platform of the Limited Express one Monday morning, as he was about to start for a three weeks' vacation on the old farm.

"Good-by!" shouted back a large crowd of Allan's church members, who had gathered at the station to see him off and to wish him a pleasant vacation.

"Forget all about us for three weeks," said Deacon Stanford, as Allan bent over and shook his hand in farewell.

"Oh, think of us once in a while, but come back rested!" exclaimed Grace Markley, who was standing by the Deacon's side.

"Come back soon. We need you here!" cried out a chorus of voices.

The conductor came running out of the telegraph office, holding his watch in his hand, and signaled to the engineer to start. The train began to move.

"Good-by, good-by, God bless you all," said Allan simply.

Led by Grace Markley the crowd began to sing:

"God be with you till we meet again:
By his counsels guide uphold you
With his sheep securely fold you,
God be with you till we meet again."

The speed of the train increased. The sound of the farewell music died away in the distance. Allan stood waving his hand until the train shot round a bend and hid his friends from view, as they waved their handkerchiefs in a last salute. As the train rushed along through the fertile fields, green with corn, and waving with wheat and oats, he watched the city of Wellington until it became a speck on the prairie.

"I will come back again," he said to himself. "My work for God lies in Wellington. I will finish the work he has given me to do." Allan changed cars after a while, at a junction station, taking a branch railroad, which ran alongside the Des Moines River. He had a long wait for this local train, and it was supper time before he reached the little village, three miles from his father's farm. He took supper at the village, and then started to walk to his destination, as he had not written home anything about his coming, wishing to surprise them.

It was in July. Iowa was as lovely as a picture, and fruitful as the Garden of Eden. The corn had just been "laid by," as the farmers say when corn plowing is over. The immense fields of this rich cereal, in which lies the wealth of the Mississippi Valley, looked beautiful with their long, regular rows of tall, green stalks. Waving fields of wheat,

ready for the reaper, and acres of oats, turning to a golden yellow, promised a rich reward to the tillers of the soil.

The picturesque Des Moines River flowed placidly by his side, as Allan wended his way along its wooded banks, over the familiar road he knew so well.

The golden sun was setting in the West, like a crowned monarch retiring for the day, his royal robes adorning the horizon with a glory surpassing that of Solomon. All was peace. There was peace in the heavens above and peace on the earth beneath. The lovely, modern homes of the prosperous Iowa farmers, surrounded by lawns, trees and gardens, spoke of peace and comfort.

The glad cries of children, as they followed the cattle home to the stalls, were music in Allan's ears, recalling the happiest memories. He drew near to his father's farm. How happy his youth had been! What a peaceful lot was that of his parents! Had he not acted foolishly himself in leaving the farm? How mean and squalid the strife in Wellington was compared with the manly independence of a farmer's life!

"But my duty," reflected Allan, "is to be an ambassador of Christ in the world. His Gospel has created this happiness and prosperity all around me here. It will yet fill the world with gladness, but it means work and struggle for some of us before the victory is complete."

Allan's parents lived in a modern home, with all conveniences. The house was heated with a furnace and lit with gas, furnished by their own light-

ing plant. Mail was delivered every day at their gate by the rural mail service of the Government, and a telephone gave instant communication with the outside world.

The farm provided a steady income, year by year, which had enabled Mr. and Mrs. Rutledge to rear a family with every advantage and themselves enjoy many of the good things of life.

"What was John Wesley thinking of when he wrote about the misery of a farmer's life," said Allan to himself, recalling the famous passage in Wesley's "Journal," in which the great English preacher says: "In the little journeys which I have lately taken I have thought much on the huge enconiums which have been for ages bestowed on a country life. How have all the learned world cried out:

> 'O fortunati nimium, sua si bona norint
> Agricolæ.'

"But, after all what a contradiction is this to universal experience. See that little house, under the wood, by the river side. This is rural life in perfection. How happy, then, is the farmer who lives there! Let us take a detail of his happiness. He rises with, or before, the sun, calls his servants, looks to his swine and cows, then to his stables and barns. He sees to the plowing and sowing of his ground, in winter or spring. In summer and autumn he hurries and sweats among his mowers and reapers. And where is his happiness in the mean time? Which of these employ-

ments do we envy? Or do we envy the delicate repast that succeeds, which the poet so languishes for?

'Oh, the happiness of eating beans well greased
with fat bacon.
Nay, and cabbage, too.'

"Was Horace in his senses when he talked thus, or the servile herd of his imitators? Our eyes and ears may convince us there is not a less happy body of men in all England than the country farmers. In general, their life is supremely dull, and it is usually unhappy, too. For of all the people in the kingdom they are most discontented; seldom satisfied either with God or man."

"The English farmers of Wesley's day may have been miserable," thought Allan, "but in this Middle West the farmer is king."

He opened the gate quietly and walked up to the front door of his old home and knocked. A big dog came bounding round the house barking, and leaped on him in joy, as it recognized its former master. The front door was open, but the screen was hooked. Allan knocked again, and his mother appeared in the room. At the sight of her son on the porch she gave a glad cry of welcome.

"Come in, my boy, come in! We have been longing to see you. Dick has been telling us all about your trouble. Come in, come in!" and the good mother wept with her arms around her preacher-son.

"It is all right, mother," he answered gently,

"things are coming out all right. I've come to stay three weeks with you."

As his brothers and sisters came in to greet him, Allan began to feel the power of the old home to soothe and bless. John Howard Payne's immortal song speaks a universal truth:

" 'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

Soon his father hurried in from the yard to greet him. "Welcome back, Allan!" said his father. "How goes the battle in Wellington?"

"It is going to be a victory, I am sure, father," answered his son. "But let us not mention Wellington any more. I have come here for a three weeks' rest, and I want to be a boy again. Treat me just as you did when I came back from college for my vacations. I am getting old too fast. I want mother to hear me say my prayers tonight, just as she used to do when I was a child."

They understood, and they treated Allan as one of themselves again. He breathed in the peaceful atmosphere of the farm. His tired nerves were rejuvenated. His old, cheerful spirit returned. Everything became bright.

But an unexpected pleasure suddenly made his visit home a dream of happiness. On his second day on the farm he had wandered up the river's bank for a couple of miles, enjoying the fresh morning air and the woodland scenery, filled with memories of former days. He was approaching a place where he remembered there was a view of

special cagnificence at a sweeping bend of the river, when suddenly he found out he was not enjoying the beauties of the Des Moines alone. A fair, girlish form was standing on a knoll a little in front of him, gazing with evident delight on the long vista of river, woods and farms. Hearing his footsteps, she turned quickly. A glad cry escaped from her lips.

"Allan, Allan, you here!" she exclaimed.

"Mabel!" cried Allan, and bounded to her side.

After the first greetings were over both were somewhat embarrassed. Allan was the first to recover himself.

"What are you doing here, Miss Grayson?" he asked.

"What are you doing here, Mr. Rutledge?" responded the girl.

"I live here," said Allan. "Our home is only two miles down the river."

"Why," said Mabel Grayson, in astonishment, "I thought you lived miles and miles from this place. This is a delightful spot. A party of us from Des Moines are camping along the bank of the river about half a mile away. I walked over here to enjoy the view. Come and see our camp," she added.

"I am home for a three weeks' rest," said Allan. "I had expected to have a splendid time on the old farm, but I never dreamed of seeing you."

They walked slowly toward the camp, talking over many things. What the conversation was about did not seem to make much difference with Allan. He felt satisfied to be in her presence

again. Knowing intuitively that any reference to his trouble with the college at Wellington would annoy him, she thoughtfully refrained from mentioning Wellington, except incidentally.

"Let us sit down here a while," said Allan, after they had gone about a quarter of a mile, "and talk."

"What will we talk about?" asked Mabel.

"Tell me about Mr. Bryan's visit to Des Moines," answered Allan.

Mabel told all about the dinner party and about the lecture of the far-famed Nebraskan.

"Mr. Bryan is a great and a good man," she continued. "Papa and he do not agree on politics, but papa thinks Mr. Bryan is a model American and an earnest Christian man. Did you ever hear him speak?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Allan, "I have heard him make a political address, but I should be delighted to hear him again, especially on such a subject as the 'Prince of Peace.'"

"It was truly a noble tribute to our King," said the girl reverently. "I shall never forget the thrill that went through his vast audience that night when he spoke of immortality. I learned the passage by heart the next day from the newspaper report. Here it is."

With a far-away look in her eyes, as she gazed across the river, the girl repeated Mr. Bryan's noble words in her sweet musical voice, while Allan listened with rapt attention:

"'If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried

acorn and to make it burst forth from its prison walls, will he leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator? If he stoops to give to the rosebush, whose withered blossoms float on the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will he refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit, like a royal guest, to this tenement of clay? No, I am as sure that there is another life as I am that I live to-day.'"

Allan was happy. He could have listened all day to the music of Mabel Grayson's voice.

But, as she finished the quotation, the girl jumped to her feet, saying: "We must be going, or they will be hunting for me as lost."

And they walked up the river's bank together to the camp.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND ANN RUTLEDGE.

After the discovery of the "camp" on the banks of the river, Allan was a frequent visitor, and soon became very popular with Mabel's young friends. He knew the country and the river at that point as only a native can know a place. He brought up a boat from his father's, and put it at the service of the campers. He told them of the best fishing spots and took them for long rambles over the countryside.

One morning he drove up to the camp in a buggy and handed Mabel an invitation from his mother to spend the day at the Rutledge farm. She was delighted with the prospect of meeting Allan's family and accepted at once.

Allan had a sister, Edith, a little younger than Mabel Grayson, who had spent a couple of years at the Normal College at Cedar Falls and was now teaching the local school. Mabel found her an exceptionally intelligent and pleasant girl. But between Mrs. Rutledge and Mabel there was a bond of affection from the beginning. They had heard a good deal of each other through Allan, and the meeting was a pleasure to both.

Mrs. Rutledge superintended in the kitchen that

morning, and the dinner was a credit to a well ordered Iowa farmhouse, which is the highest kind of compliment.

After the hearty dinner was over, Mrs. Rutledge and Mabel had a long talk together in the parlor. During this conversation Allan was mentioned quite often, and once Mabel remarked that he was a great admirer of Abraham Lincoln, and often quoted the war President in his sermons.

"He would not be a Rutledge if he did not admire Abraham Lincoln," said Mrs. Rutledge in reply. "Abraham Lincoln is well remembered in the life story of the Rutledge family."

"How is that?" asked Mabel, very much interested.

"Did you never hear the story of Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge?" said Allan's mother, in surprise.

"I must have forgotten it if I did," said the girl, with a blush.

"The world doesn't know much about that incident in Lincoln's life," went on the good lady. "Such things are soon forgotten, but the influence of Ann Rutledge, who was a sister of Allan's grandpa, was one of the forces that helped to make Lincoln what he was."

"Tell me about it," said Mabel eagerly, and Mrs. Rutledge told her the tender story of Abraham Lincoln's early love.

"I often heard Allan's grandpa tell it," Mrs. Rutledge began, "and I never tired of hearing him speak of his sweet sister, Ann. He used to tell how Abraham Lincoln first came to New Salem

in Illinois, in the early thirties, and James Rutledge, his father, was one of the first men who saw what was in the coming President. He was so lank and ungainly that some thought he was only a lout, but James Rutledge that's Allan's great-grandfather, took to Lincoln from the start. Ann Rutledge was the third child, and she grew up to be a girl of uncommon beauty. She was as good as she was beautiful. In all that country there was no maid like Ann Rutledge. She had a host of admirers, but she finally chose one, called McNeil, a young and prosperous trader and farmer of New Salem. Soon after they were engaged to be married Ann had a terrible shock. McNeil told her that he had been living under a false name. His real name was McNamar but he had changed his name when he came West, as he wanted to build up a fortune unknown to his people in the East. He said he had an aged father, and that he wanted to sell out his business in Illinois, and go back to take care of him. He promised to return and wed Ann, who had given him all the love of her young heart. She agreed to await his return.

"After he went East letters came for some time, but they came less and less frequently, and at last ceased altogether. Ann was only nineteen at this time, and I have heard Allan's grandpa tell how the blow of McNamar's treatment soon began to tell on Ann's health. It was at this time that Abraham Lincoln learned to love her. She knew well what a man Lincoln was, and it grieved her sore that she was bound so she could not return

his love. At last she told him all about her false lover. She had now ceased to love McNamar, as she could not love a man who had proved so false, but she was so high principled that she felt he must release her before she could enter into another engagement. Finally, she yielded to Lincoln's wooing, and became betrothed, though she still felt that the other lover had a claim on her life.

"When Lincoln knew that there was hope that Ann Rutledge might be his wife, he seemed like a new man. He took up the work of life with new vigor. Never was he so happy, before or after, as during those days when he was looking forward to an early marriage with the noble and beautiful girl, who had now given him her affection. It was at this time that he entered the State Legislature, and began that political career which ended in the White House."

Mabel was listening intently, as the old lady recalled the scenes of the past. Her eye was moist in sympathy with the sorrow-riven heart of the gentle Ann.

"Did they ever hear of McNamar again?" she asked.

"I remember how grandpa would boil," answered Allan's mother, "as we mentioned the name of that faithless lover. He really killed Ann. They never cared to know anything about him. Poor Ann had an affection for Lincoln. She always called him 'Abraham,' not 'Abe,' as the rest did. But she was a highly sensitive girl, and the

long strain about McNamar was too much. Her health began to fail. Her friends could see her droop. But Lincoln refused to believe that the light of his life was to go out so soon. At last she sent for him and they talked together alone for a long time. No one ever knew just what passed between them, but when Lincoln left the house that day he knew she was going, and he never was the same man again. Before that he was always calm and self-controlled, but his whole soul seemed to collapse before the coming blow."

Mabel listened with tear-filled eyes, but she did not interrupt, and Mrs. Rutledge kept on:

"On the 25th of August, 1835, Ann Rutledge died, but she never died out of Lincoln's heart. He never forgot her, but in her grave was buried his last hope of ever knowing the joy of a satisfied heart. His grief at the time was terrible to witness. I well remember, when I was a girl, I have heard grandpa tell of it, and he would cry himself, as he told of poor Lincoln's agony. Lincoln used to moan piteously, 'I never can be reconciled to have the snow, rain and storms beat upon her grave.' It was feared for a while that he would lose his reason. They used to watch him, so that he might not be allowed to injure himself. After a few weeks he got better, and began to work again, but he was like a man in despair. It was at this time that he learned those verses that people always associate with his name. Grandpa told us how he would sit by himself and say over and over again those sad lines:

'Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift fleeting meteor a fast flying cloud
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
He passeth from life to the rest of the grave.

'The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around and together be laid,
And the young and the old, and the low and the high,
Shall molder to dust and together shall lie.'

"He could not mention the name of his lost love," continued Mrs. Rutledge, "but he would break down and cry. When Allan was a little fellow his grandpa was an old man, but Allan used to like to hear the story. Allan has always felt as though Lincoln was related to him. It has had an influence on the boy's life in more ways than one. Grandpa felt nearly as bad as Lincoln about the death of his lovely sister Ann, and he used to say he wanted to live so that Ann would never be ashamed of him when they met in the better world. I will always believe that Abraham Lincoln owed a great deal to the memory of that pure, beautiful, heart-broken girl, who won his great heart when he was an unknown young man at New Salem."

"It was sad, wasn't it?" said Mabel.

"I was back in Illinois," responded Mrs. Rutledge, "some years ago, and I went to look at Ann Rutledge's grave. Only a simple stone with her name marks the spot. It is so different from Lincoln's grand tomb in Springfield, but I know well that if Lincoln had his wish Ann would have had

the marble masouleum, and for her sake he would have been content with a simple headstone. It's a sad story," concluded Allan's mother, "and perhaps I should not have told it to you, for you are so young and happy."

"Thank you very much for telling me the story. I shall always remember Ann Rutledge. I know now why Allan reveres Lincoln's memory."

"Come down from Des Moines some time," said Mrs. Rutledge, as Mabel left for the "camp" in the evening, "and visit with us for a week or two. Edith and all of us will be glad to see you."

Mabel promised to make a visit at corn gathering time, and she and Allan drove up the river road.

"What a lovely home you have," Mabel said, after a silence. "I do not know when I have enjoyed myself so much as to-day. Your mother told me the story of Ann Rutledge. Wasn't it sad? Poor Ann! Yet I think, as your mother says, her influence was one of the forces that molded Lincoln into the man that he was."

"Life is a strange jumble sometimes. Isn't it?" remarked Allan.

"Yes, but do you notice, Mr. Rutledge, that all things work for good, and even the tragedy of Ann Rutledge's life wrought for the blessing of the world."

"I am beginning to see that truth more clearly than ever before," answered Allan "we know it must be so, but often Providence has been mysterious to me."

"They have lit a big camp fire to-night," cried

Mabel, as a bend in the road showed a gleaming fire at the camp. "Stay with us for a while, Mr. Rutledge, and we will have some camp fire musings."

Allan did not need a second invitation. When they were seated in a ring around the blazing fire, Allan was asked for a story.

"Did you ever hear of Pat and Bridget's wedding?" asked Allan.

"No, tell us about it," they cried in a chorus.

"It was the wedding day of Pat and Bridget," began Allan, "and they were having a church wedding. It was a grand affair. Pat was dressed with patent leather shoes, white vest and flaming tie. Bridget was arrayed in all the colors of the rainbow. After the interesting ceremony was over, and the happy pair walked down the aisle and out into the street, a great crowd looked on with delight. The occasion was an important one, and Bridget felt her dignity to the full. When they had reached the waiting cab, and were seated within, Bridget leaned over to Pat and said, in a loud whisper: "Och, Pat, if we could only have stood on the sidewalk and watched ourselves pass, wouldn't it have been *hivin?*'"

There were shouts of laughter and calls for another story, but Allan called on Mabel for a song.

"Give us one of Burns' songs," he requested.

The surroundings were romantic. The dark woods were lit up with a weird glare from the fire. The waters of the Des Moines River were murmuring by their sides. The fitful flames of the burning logs played on the gay faces of the happy

young people. Two elderly people, Mr. and Mrs. Heron, of Des Moines, were the chaperons of the party, and they were seated at the door of their tent. There were two other large sleeping tents, a dining room tent and a kitchen tent. It was a striking picture, reminding one of Indian life in bygone days.

"I will sing 'Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon,' if you like," said Mabel.

"Yes! yes!" all cried.

Mabel stood up beside the fire to sing. As her sweet, rich voice rose in the night air, a spell seemed to come over the company, and she sang, with deep feeling, the pathetic song of Scotland's poet. She was thinking of Ann Rutledge and her sad story as she sang, and Allan knew it well. Never were the words of this Scottish song rendered more effectively than that night on the Des Moines.

"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care?

"Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons through the flowering thorn;
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed—never to return.

"Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause lover stole my rose,
But ah, he left the thorn wi' me."

There was a silence as she ceased, broken only by the gentle murmurs of the river's waters and the crackling of the camp fire.

Then Mabel's mood changed. She began to sing merrily the old favorite, "Good Night, Ladies." They all joined hands in a large circle around the dying fire, and dancing around the flickering glare, like sylvan elves, they sang in heartiest notes together:

"Good night, ladies; good night, ladies; good night, ladies;
We're going to leave you now.
Farewell, ladies; farewell, ladies; farewell, ladies;
We're going to leave you now.
Sweet dreams, ladies; sweet dreams, ladies; sweet dreams, ladies;
We're going to leave you now.
Merrily we roll along, over the dark blue sea."

Allan drove home that night with his whole soul reveling in "sweet dreams."

BRAWNE

CHAPTER XV.

THE WELLINGTON CHAUTAUQUA.

When Rev. Allan Rutledge stepped off the train at Wellington on his return from his vacation on the old farm he was like a new man. It did not seem possible that this tanned, care-free athlete was the same pale, care-worn preacher who had left Wellington just three weeks before. He looked five years younger and he had the step of a conquerer as he walked up the street to his home. The cordial greetings given him on every hand added to his pleasure in arriving once more at the scene of his task in life.

The Wellington's Chautauqua was in full blast on his return, and the next day he was to appear on the program and deliver a lecture on "International Peace." He spent a good part of the intervening time in preparation for this address, and did not go out to the Chautauqua grounds until the following day at the hour when he was to appear on the platform. The Chautauquas of the Middle West are among its most picturesque features in the summer time. The Wellington Chautauqua was famed as one of the largest in the State of Iowa. A monster tent had been erected in a shady grove, near the college, and

around this big tent a little white city had arisen, in which were camping a large number of the citizens and also farmers from throughout the country.

The whole community united in the enterprise, and this common social life for about eight or ten days brought all classes together. Bohemians were camped beside Englishmen, and old-time Yankees were surrounded by tents, in which lived Germans, Frenchmen, Irishmen, Swedes and other nationalities which make up the throbbing, vigorous life of the West.

In the large Chautauqua tent a varied program was given daily, lasting from morning until late at night, during the week or ten days of the gathering. Colored minstrels sang. Cartoonists and lightning artists drew pictures on the stage. Prominent Congressmen and Senators lectured on all kinds of subjects. Reformers made addresses, and bell-ringers, orchestras and bands added to the variety of the entertainment and to the pleasure of the assembled thousands. During the Sabbath days popular religious services were held, and preachers of international reputation delivered religious discourses.

Everyone of the three thousand seats in the big Chautauqua tent was occupied, and hundreds were standing around the edges of the tent, when Allan mounted the platform to give his lecture. It was the first time that the majority of the people had seen him since his return, and the greeting was tremendous. The thousands rose as one man, cheering and waving handkerchiefs. When the

tumult had subsided, Allan began in a quiet way and introduced his subject to the audience.

About the middle of the tent sat Grace Markley by the side of her mother. When she saw Allan stride to the front of the platform, with health and vigor in his every movement and power in his whole bearing, she was delighted to see how much his vacations had revived him. And when she saw the crowded audience rise in its enthusiastic greeting her joy knew no bounds. "Mr. Rutledge has won," she said to herself.

"There are two kinds of people who do not approve of war," said the speaker, as he went on in his lecture. "There are some who are like the Irishman who had enlisted in the army in a spirit of adventure, but when his regiment marched into battle Pat apparently made up his mind very quickly that he did not approve of war—at least for himself—and so he retreated to the rear without waiting for orders. His commanding officer called him into his presence later on and demanded what he meant by retreating to the rear without orders, as soon as the action began. 'Your honor,' said Erin's son, 'I have a heart in me as brave as the heart of Julius Cæsar, but I can't foight, gineral, for when the action begins me cowardly legs run away with me.'"

Loud laughter here interrupted the speaker, for a Chautauqua audience is always in good humor, and before Allan could resume Pat McGinnis, who was seated near the front, yelled out: "Your rivirince, that man wasn't an Oirishman. He was a Russian." Again the audience laughed.

"I stand corrected," said Allan smilingly. "I always thought that soldier did not act like an Irishman, although he talked like one."

Great applause greeted this happy remark, and the audience was now enraptured with the speaker.

"But there are a rapidly growing number in our day," went on Allan earnestly, "who do not approve of war because they look upon it as irrational, barbarous and wicked on the part of Christian nations when settling disputes among themselves. The growing spirit of humanity and justice, and the widespread teachings of the Prince of Peace in the world, are changing the opinions of men in regard to this method of settling disputes among the nations of the earth. The reign of international peace is no irridescent dream," proclaimed the lecturer. "Practical men like Andrew Carnegie, and leading statesman, like Theodore Roosevelt, and James Bryce, of England, are ardent advocates of this all-important reform. Tennyson, as he dipped into the future, sang of a time when

> 'The war drum would throb no longer
> And the battle flag be furled,
> In a Parliament of Man,
> A Federation of the world.'

Tennyson's dream will become a reality."

"The worst thing about war," said Allan, growing more and more enthusiastic, and carrying his audience with him in the fervency of his eloquence,

"is not the loss of wealth that it entails, making it necessary for the weary toilers of humanity to spend their strength for years in creating wealth that is poured out like water in a war of a few weeks' duration.

"The worst thing about war is not the carnage on the battlefield, the awful agonies of the wounded, the men maimed for life, the widowed mothers and orphaned children, terrible as all this is. The worst thing about war is that it is virtually a denial of reason, an insult to justice and a proclamation by men that in this world of God's, might makes right. Abraham Lincoln once said, 'Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right,' and Abraham Lincoln spoke the truth. If two nations have a dispute, and they appeal to war as a method of settling this dispute, the stronger nation may crush the weaker, but that does not prove that the stronger nation was right. War is a proper method for tigers and dogs to use in settling their disputes in the jungle and in the barnyard, but among civilized and Christian men war is barbarous and monstrous. Among men it is not war that settles things. It is JUSTICE."

As Allan pealed out these last words, his voice was like the sound of many waters. His argument struck home. The appeal to justice aroused a common feeling in the breasts of the various nationalities in his audience. A simultaneous burst of deafening applause broke out all over the crowd. Justice is a platform broad enough to include all the nations of men, and, standing on this platform, men can respect themselves and one another.

"There are some here, I expect," went on Allan, toward the close of his address, "who are wondering about the actual realization of international peace through an International Arbitration Court. It is true that back of every court of justice in the world, as it is to-day, there must be the policeman to uphold the decisions of the court. And back of this International Arbitration Court there would need be an international police force to uphold its decisions among the nations of the world. But the organization of this international police force is going to be easily solved," continued Allan, looking at Pat McGinnis with a smile. "We can get all the policemen we need at any time, for Ireland is ready to put in a bid to supply them all."

Like all experienced Chautauqua orators, Allan well knew the value of a little humor in such an address as his. At this sally Pat McGinnis led them all in hearty laughter. Allan concluded his powerful message with a glowing tribute to the United States of America as the nation having in its hands to-day the destiny of the world.

"One of America's duties to humanity at this hour is the inauguration of a movement which will forever drive out the horrors, brutality and unreason of war and militarism from among men, and bring in an era of international peace.

"'Let woe and waste of warfare cease,
That useful labor yet may build
Its homes with love and laughter fillled.
God, give thy wayward children peace."

The stillness of a summer's eve was over the

audience for a moment when Allan had ceased. Then once more the people rose and cheered to the echo the message and the man.

When Allan went around the Chautauqua grounds that afternoon, he was greeted on every hand with the utmost cordiality. Dr. Lucas and Deacon Stanford were among the first to congratulate him on his magnificent lecture, and also on his improved appearance.

"Doctor," said Allan laughingly to Dr. Lucas, "your pills are all right, but there is no medicine for me like the old farm."

"That is the remark of a wise physician," answered the doctor.

Grace Markley was also one of the first to speak to him and tell him of her pleasure in seeing him look so strong and well.

"I knew that a rest was all you needed," she added.

"I had a glorious time," responded Allan, with a joy in his eye which did not escape Grace's observation. "Your cousin, Miss Grayson, was camping, along with some Des Moines friends, about two miles from our home and we had a most delightful time."

He was about to leave the grounds, when something altogether unexpected happened. Walking along alone, he met President Older and Professor Gilman face to face. Allan had not met the professor since that eventful night when he had ejected him from the room in the college. President Older bowed coldly, but the professor turned his head the other way.

Allan was now altogether himself again, and, thinking that it was right he should offer terms of reconciliation to the college people, he stopped in front of them.

"How are you, Dr. Older?" said the minister, holding out his hand.

The college president ignored Allan's hand, and said frigidly: "Quite as well as usual, Mr. Rutledge."

Without paying further attention to the minister, both of them were passing on, when Allan turned to President Older and said, with great earnestness: "Dr. Older, I am desirous of healing the breach between the college and the church in Wellington. The unseemly strife is hurting the cause of the kingdom of God here, for which both institutions exist. Can we not let bygones be bygones, and all of us commence anew after vacation, working together for our common cause."

"The church and the college will work together after you have resigned and not before," said the president with a sneer. "We expect the breach to be healed soon, but it can only be healed in one way."

The dark eyes of Allan Rutledge gleamed like fire as he noticed the sneering tone of the educator, but, controlling himself, he made one more effort.

"President Older," he answered slowly and thoughtfully, as though weighing every word, "you can see for yourself that the community approves of my ministry in Wellington. I am human and I make mistakes, as men always have done and

always will do, but the church and community accept me as God's minister in spite of my failings. With me the voice of my people is the voice of God. I am in Wellington to remain, and I offer you this opportunity for reconciliation."

"When we need advice from you, Rutledge," broke in Professor Gilman, who had been listening to Allan with a dark frown of hatred, "we will ask it. You have shown us what you are and we want no more of you."

With a burst of righteous indignation, such as Paul showed toward Elymas in Cyprus, Allan turned on the professor, who drew back with a start.

"I showed the community what you are, sir," said Allan, with blazing eye. "I was not addressing you; I was speaking to the president of the college. Pray be good enough to allow us the privilege of an interview."

The professor skulked off in confusion, and Allan again turned to Dr. Older.

"I am deeply in earnest about this matter, doctor. It has meant a good deal for me to come to you in this way, but I have felt it my duty to do this in the spirit of a Christian. I offer you again this opportunity to reconcile the church and the college without further damage to the cause of Christ in Iowa. Will you accept it?"

President Older hesitated. He had just seen the influence that Allan had gained over the community in the reception they had given him in the Chautauqua tent. No other speaker had aroused an equal enthusiasm. He well knew Allan's force

as a speaker, his record as a student, and he was convinced that he was a young man of intense zeal for the religion he professed and preached. To drive such a man out of his pulpit meant a battle. In spite of the influence of the leaders of the church in Iowa he was well aware that many of the rank and file of the Iowa ministry were on Allan's side openly.

But Dr. Older thought of Elder Markley. He thought of the minister's jealous fellow-pastors in the State, who were already rejoicing in his apparently imminent downfall, and had promised their assistance at the convention. He remembered that the whole program in regard to the "Rutledge matter" had been outlined, and that to change his policy now would alienate some of his former friends.

"There are more concerned in this matter than myself," he replied, at length. "Only on one condition can the church and the college in Wellington work in harmony again. You must resign."

"Doctor," replied Allan, "if you decide to espouse the side of the church in this matter, all other opposition falls to the ground. You alone give it strength."

"I have begun this fight on you," said the college lege president, "and I am going to carry it to a finish," and there was a ring of vindictiveness in his voice.

"Dr. Older," said Allan, and there was a tremble in his voice, "that is not religion. But be it so," he added sadly. "Later on some day you will remember that I offered you peace and that you chose war."

CHAPTER XVI.

A MIDNIGHT ALARM.

"Toot, toot, too-oo-oo-oo-oot."

The piercing cry of the fire alarm startled the midnight air in Wellington the night after the Chautauqua had closed.

"Too-oo-oot, too-oo-oo-oot."

Allan Rutledge awoke and jumped to his feet.

"Fire, fire!" someone yelled in the street below, and he could see the lurid reflection of flames on his bedroom wall. He rushed to the window, and saw that the fire was blazing not more than a block away. Hastily dressing himself, Allan ran in the direction of the burning house. A crowd was fast collecting. People were hurrying, many of them only half-dressed, along the street. In a city like Wellington a fire is a most dreaded enemy. The frame buildings burn like tinder if a blaze gets well started. Whole towns have been swept out of existence in a single night by the devouring flames. Wellington had a volunteer fire department. The city owned two hose carts, with hook and ladder combination, and a chemical engine. Two horses were kept in constant readiness, and the driver slept at the fire house, but the firemen were citizens who had volunteered their services.

At the sound of the fire alarm these volunteers reported at the fire house as quickly as possible. When a fire alarm is turned in the telephone operator at "central" also connects the homes of all the firemen and sends out a general call, supplementing the notice which the fire whistle gives.

"It is old Abe Daniels' house! The roof is on fire!" Allan heard someone shout.

In a few minutes he had joined the growing crowd around the burning building. It was Mr. Daniels' house, and Allan saw the old man and his wife emerge from the hall door as he ran up. They were only half-dressed and much excited. Mrs. Daniels was at once taken charge by some women neighbors, who had been aroused by the dreaded alarm, but the old man rushed in a frenzy among the crowd, shouting, "Put it out, put it out!" The clang of a bell was heard and the sharp reports of galloping horses. The fire department was coming at full speed. The fire was confined to one side of the roof evidently started by defective electric light wiring. The glare of the burning shingles lit up the surrounding houses with a weird gleam. The foaming steeds of the firemen dashed up to the curb. Men leaped from the fire wagon, and began uncoiling the hose with lightning-like rapidity, rushing with one end of it to the stand-pipe at the street corner. Others took the long ladders and placed them in position, so that the fire-fighters could ascend to the roof, and battle with the enemy at close quarters. There was a roofed upper porch on the side of the building remote from the flames, and the fire chief at

once directed a ladder to be placed there, as the flat roof of the upper porch would give a safe vantage ground from which to drench the burning roof. The ladder was hastily raised and a fireman, who was no other than Louis Antoine, the Bohemian helper in the paint shop, darted up, carrying the nozzle of the hose. He was quickly followed by the fire chief, who also caught the heavy rubber hose, and was helping to carry it to the roof. The weight of the hose on one side of the ladder caused it to veer a little to one side. In their haste the ladder had not been placed exactly straight, and it began to slip. Louis Antoine was already near the top of the ladder, and the fire chief was halfway up, when the cry was raised, "The ladder's falling, the ladder's falling!"

The women in the crowd shrieked in terror. Allen was standing close to the house, beside Mr. Daniels, when the cry was raised. He instinctively clutched the old man and drew back with all speed. He was not a moment too soon. With a crash the ladder fell, striking the very spot where he and Mr. Daniels had stood, and carrying with it the unfortunate Bohemian. The fire chief had jumped and partly saved himself, but he lay groaning and helpless on the ground. His leg was broken. Allan and some others rushed forward to pick up Antoine. He was unconscious. As he fell the ladder had struck him, and he was evidently very seriously injured. They carried him tenderly across the street into a neighbor's house. On Allan's immediate return to the fire he found all in confusion. The fire was gaining. In a short time

the whole house, and perhaps the whole block, would be doomed. The accident to the fire chief had demoralized the firemen, as their chief had been in charge of every fire for over fifteen years, and none knew just how to take the lead. To make matters worse, old Mr. Daniels was running among the people, frantically begging someone to help save his home. Allan noticed Frank Antol in the crowd. He called him to his side, and going up to Mr. Daniels he said: "Mr. Daniels, here is Frank Antol. He will take you to my house close by. I will see this fire is put out at once. It is too much for you to stay here. Go to my home and rest."

The old man, weeping like a child, went helplessly down the street with young Antol toward Allan's house. Meanwhile, the young minister assumed control. While at college he had been fire chief of the little hose company they had at the school, and, while he had never superintended the work of putting out an actual fire, he was familiar with the handling of hose.

"Come, boys!" he shouted, in a tone of authority. "Raise this ladder again, quick!" The ladder was soon again in position. "Now, two of you men hold it, and one man follow me, and let us get the hose up on top quickly or it will be too late." The men hastened to obey, glad to find a leader able to take charge. In a moment he and his helper were safe on the top of the upper porch roof.

"Turn on the water!" he shouted down. There was a gurgling sound as the long hose twisted and

swirled like a living thing. Then came a loud report, and a large stream of water gushed from the nozzle and fell sizzling on the blazing roof. "Train the other hose on the fire from the ground!" Allan shouted again. Soon a second stream was rising from the ground and falling like a deluge of rain on the flames. It was not a moment too soon. The terrible roar, which fire has when it gets the mastery, was beginning to awe the onlookers, when Allan's prompt action saved the situation. The two steady streams of water played on the burning wood relentlessly, and the demon of fire began to retreat. The bright flame died out. The roar was stilled. The steady splash of water became more and more distinct. In ten minutes all danger was over. Allan stayed on the roof until he had seen the last spark die out, and even when he staggered down the ladder he took no chances, but sent up a fresh man to keep a lookout lest a hidden spark renew the flame.

"All out!" This glad cry, which signifies the close of the battle between the firemen and the destroying element, passed from mouth to mouth, and the crowd began to disperse. When Allan reached his home he found Mr. Daniels lying, utterly exhausted, on the bed. Assisting him to retire for the balance of the night, and assuring him that all danger of fire was over and that his home was saved, Allan turned the bed over to his visitor and lay down himself on a couch in his study. He was very tired and soon fell fast asleep. He was awakened by Mr. Daniels coming into the study to bid him good-by.

"I am going over to Mr. Wilson's for breakfast," he said to the minister. "My wife went there last night, and I want to hurry over and assure her that I am all right. I want to thank you, Mr. Rutledge, for what you did for me last night." The old man was entirely calm again after the excitement caused by the fire in his house. "I have had hard thoughts of you, sir," he went on, with the suspicion of a tear in his eye, "but I want you to forgive me. Count me as your friend after this Mr. Rutledge."

"It is all right, Mr. Daniels. No harm has been done," replied Allan, giving the old man a hearty handshake. "I hope you will find Mrs. Daniels all right. I do not think the house has been badly damaged." After a hasty breakfast Allan hurried to the home where Louis Antoine was carried after his accident. In the excitement of subduing the flames he had almost forgotten the injured fireman. He found Doctor Lucas and Pat McGinnis watching by Antoine's side. The grave look on the doctor's face showed Allan that the unfortunate man was seriously, if not fatally, hurt.

"How is he, Doctor?" he whispered.

"No hope," answered the physician. "It was a terrible fall and the ladder struck him."

"Has he been conscious yet?" the minister asked.

"Not yet, but I am expecting him to arouse at any time. I think he will regain consciousness for a little while before the end comes, but it will soon be all over with the brave fellow."

They waited quietly by the bedside in silence. Antoine was breathing heavily, and shortly after

Allan's arrival he began to moan in his unconscious sleep.

"He is going to wake up," said the doctor as the injured man turned over, still moaning."

"Come on, come on, chief!" Antoine began to struggle and shout out in a strange, husky voice these words.

"That's what he was saying just as the ladder fell," whispered Allan.

In a few moments Louis Antoine opened his eyes and looked around in wonder. "Where am I?" he asked.

"You are here with us," said the doctor gently. "You had a bad fall at the fire last night."

"Oh, yes," said the fireman; "I remember. The ladder slipped. Was our chief hurt?" he asked.

"His leg was broken," answered the doctor; "but he will be well again in a few weeks. How are you feeling?"

"I feel strange here," said the Bohemian, laying his left hand over his heart. His right hand was helpless.

"You fell just beside me, Mr. Antoine," said the minister, coming up to the head of the bed, "but I couldn't help you."

"I know you would have done it, if you could," answered the other, as a look of agony crossed his face, showing the watchers that the sufferings of a broken body were beginning.

"Mr. Antoine," said Allan tenderly, "you are seriously hurt. Is there anything I can do for you? Any message you want to send?"

"I have no relatives in this country," the Bohe-

mian answered, "but I have a brother in Prague, Bohemia. His name is Vaseck Antoine. Write him. Tell him I became a Christian."

Antoine was a bachelor, and had lived with another Bohemian family. The injured man soon realized that he was fatally hurt. After several awful spasms of pain a numbing sensation began to creep over his body.

"Louis," said Pat McGinnis, coming forward, "I'm sorry to see you suffering so."

The man's face lit up for a moment as he recognized his work-fellow, and then another bolt of pain shot through his poor, broken body.

"Does it hurt ye so bad?" asked the Irishman tenderly.

"Ach, Pat," said the former infidel, "it is not the pains of my body that trouble me now. I was just thinking, as I saw you, of that day we fought in the paint shop."

"Don't spake av' it, at all, at all," said Pat, wiping his eyes.

"Mr. Rutledge," said Antoine faintly, "come here. Allan sat down beside him.

"I want to thank you, sir, for leading me into the light. Ach, but I used to live in darkness, awful darkness." He paused, as mortal agony again rent his frame."

"But, Mr. Rutledge, I am sore troubled just now."

"Trust in your Saviour, Louis. He will carry you safely."

"I know that, pastor. I am not doubting him at all. But, ach, Pat will tell you how I once said

an awful word about my Saviour. I can't bear to meet him when I think of it."

"Kape still, Louis," said his former antagonist. "I knew as little about religion as ye at wan time."

Allan, of course, did not understand what the conversation was about, but he knew the grace of Jesus was sufficient.

"Don't worry about anything in your past life, Louis," said the minister. "You remember what God's Word says: 'If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' You have shown us all that you are a true believer of the Christ.

"I am so sorry I said it, but I did it in ignorance," said the dying Bohemian.

Doctor Lucas felt his pulse. "He is getting weaker," he whispered to Allan. "He will lapse into a coma and never awake again on earth."

"Louis, you are not afraid to go where Jesus is, are you?" asked Allan, taking out his pocket Bible.

"No, no," said the poor man, "but I wanted to live and work for him here. I have been such a bad man."

"God knows best, Louis. You remember what President McKinley said: 'It is God's way, not ours. His will be done.' You have done a great work for Jesus already among your fellow-countrymen in Wellington."

"Tell the boys at the shop good-by for me," said Antoine, speaking to Pat McGinnis. "Tell them I was ready and that I died a Christian."

"Louis, we can't let you go," said Pat, the tears running down his cheek.

"Don't cry, Pat. I'm not afraid to go. I am glad I was on the ladder and not one of the men who has a wife and children. No one will miss me."

"We'll all miss you, Louis," answered the kind-hearted Irishman.

The change that precedes dissolution began to spread over Antoine's countenance. Allan began to read the wonderful words of life in John's gospel: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also."

"Precious Saviour," spoke the Bohemian, as Allan had finished. These were his last words. Unconsciousness came on again, and about noon the spirit of Louis Antoine had fled. His fatal accident made a lasting impression on all the men at the factory. Allan was asked to preach a memorial sermon for him at some future time to all the men. The firemen showed their appreciation of their brave comrade by sending a large wreath of roses for the funeral. The service in which the last respects of the living for this foreigner were shown was held in the church. The firemen and the employees of Markley's factory attended in a body. The entire city came to do reverence to this humble hero, who had died doing

his duty. His well known conversion from infidelity to the faith of Christ gave a sense of reality and fitness to the last obsequies. Allan sought to turn their thoughts heavenward. The text of the sermon was "Well done, good and faithful servant." As they went home from that funeral service of Louis Antoine there was a fresh resolution in many a heart to live more earnestly and faithfully.

Allan was elected an honorary member of the Firemen's Association, and they arranged to attend his church once every year as an organization. This was the beginning of "Firemen's Day" in the church calendar in Wellington.

CHAPTER XVII.

FREDERICK MARKLEY BEGINS TO REAP.

"I am going to ask him for $1,000 to-night, and I will get it."

"And I must have $500 at once."

"He will be here soon. I told him to be prompt," continued the first speaker. "I can't see why he is so stingy. His father is as rich as a Jew. If he doesn't promise to hand over the cash I will say some things to-night that will make him sit up and take notice."

This conversation took place one evening in the back room of one of Wellington's law offices. There was a man and a woman in the room, both fashionably dressed. The woman wore a heavy gold bracelet on her wrist, and had on her finger a gold ring, in which blazed a large diamond. Her age was about thirty, and, though decidedly handsome, there was a sensual look on her face, and a bold expression that would repel those who love modesty in women.

The man was a few years younger, not more than twenty-six. He was rather a fine looking fellow, but he had a sharp, cunning look in his eyes, which gave him a sinister appearance. As they were speaking, a footstep was heard on the rear stairway, and soon there was a knock at the door.

"Who's there?" asked the man in the room, whose name was Jamison White. He was a young lawyer, and it was in the rear room of his law office that this secret night meeting was held.

"Markley," said a subdued voice in the hallway.

White unlocked the door and Frederick Markley stepped inside.

"Good evening, Mrs. Frisbie," he said, with a cold bow to the woman.

"How are you, Fred?" said the woman, rising and putting out her hand.

Young Markley shook hands, but in no cordial manner.

The woman's name was Mrs. Frisbie, and her life was a sad commentary on the influence of both the social and church life of a community when religion is more a name than a reality. Mrs. Frisbie was the wife of a good, honest man, George Frisbie, whom everyone in Wellington respected. He was the manager of the office at Markley's factory, and a trusted employee. As a consistent Christian, he was one of the most faithful members of the Wellington Church, but his wife was a millstone around his neck. They had two children, a son and a daughter, eight and ten years of age, but in spite of this, Mrs. Frisbie had dishonored her home.

When the Frisbies came to Wellington several years previous to this time, they were received cordially into society, and at once took their places in the Wellington Church. At first all went well, and both of them were held in the highest respect, but a sad change happened. Mr. Frisbie was often

compelled to return to the office at night during the busy season at the factory, and when he was at home he preferred to remain with the children rather than seek the pleasures of society. Accordingly, his wife was in the habit of going out a good deal without him to dances and social gatherings. She also sang in the choir at the church, and attended choir practise once a week. Her striking beauty and dashing manner soon attracted the attention of Frederick Markley, and he often escorted her home from the dances and choir practises. The result may be imagined. Mrs. Frisbie lost interest in her husband and even in her children, and was out so often in the evenings at various gatherings that she began to have a "name" among the observing. For the sake of Mr. Frisbie, with whom all sympathized, little was said about her evident lapse, and she was even tolerated by the best people in the community.

Her presence in the choir was a continual heartbreak to Dr. Anning, but the peace and harmony of the church could not be sacrificed by making any attempt to get rid of her. After Allan Rutledge became minister and the entire atmosphere of the church changed, Mrs. Frisbie quit the choir of her own accord. She had an intense dislike for the new minister, and was loudest in condemnation of his act in "blackening the reputation of our college," as she expressed it.

Jamison White, the young lawyer who was in the office along with her that evening when young Markley joined them, was one of Wellington's fast set. He had a showy office and seemed to have

plenty of money, but his entire time was given to social frivolities. People often wondered how his law practice, which was almost nothing, could bring him in an income sufficient for his lavish expenditures.

After Frederick Markley joined them, White carefully locked the door. He opened the conversation by remarking:

"I am a little sleepy to-night. I was out at the fire last night and lost nearly a whole night's sleep over old Daniels' bonfire. I expect Rutledge thinks he did a big thing at the fire," he added. "The whole town is getting crazy after that fool preacher. I came near jerking the hose last night, and pulling him off the roof. I felt like doing it."

"I wish you had," said Mrs. Frisbie, with a frown. "I can't bear that man. I do not see what our church wants with such a preacher."

"If they were all like you," said Markley, with a sneer, "Rutledge could pack his trunk to-morrow, but I suppose the preacher thanks the stars that there is only one Mrs. Frisbie a member of his church."

"I hate him!" hissed the woman, but she flushed as she noted the sneer in Markley's voice, for the sneer was for her benefit. Mrs. Frisbie had had one encounter with Allan Rutledge. It was during the Gospel meetings, when Mrs. Frisbie went to the minister about some "doubts" she had in reference to the Christian religion.

"What do you make of the creation story in Genesis?" she had asked the minister.

Allan Rutledge knew well her reputation for a fondness for the society of men to the neglect of her husband and family, and when she asked him this question one day he looked her straight in the face and answered:

"Mrs. Frisbie, I see in the creation story that God made one man for one woman, and I think that is one of its most important lessons."

The false wife made no reply, but walked off in high indignation, and thereafter her bitterness against the new minister was only equaled by the bitterness of Elder Markley and President Older.

"That Rutledge is a four-flusher," said White sneeringly. "I see nothing in him at all. Look out for your sister, Markley. Rutledge is acting sweet toward her. I saw them together to-day out near the house of that Irishman, Pat McGinnis."

Frederick Markley was not lost to all honor. His sister was sacred in his eyes, and to hear White mention her like this irritated him.

"Don't trouble about my sister," he answered hotly. "She seems to know a real rascal at sight." And young Markley scowled at White.

White knew what he meant, for he had tried himself to attract the attention of Grace Markley some time before, but she had promptly spurned him off in disgust.

"Oh, yes, Miss Markley is so good," sniffed Mrs. Frisbie, with upturned nose.

"Shut up, you ———," snapped out Markley, turning toward her in a towering rage.

"Come, come, let us get down to business," said White, drawing his chair near the table. "Mark-

ley, I want another thousand from you by next Saturday."

As he slowly uttered these words, Markley's eyes lost their fire. His cheek grew pale. He seemed to be trembling, as he answered:

"A thousand more, White? Why I cannot possibly do it now."

"You must!" said the other, and his teeth came together like a steel trap.

Young Markley dropped his head in his hands. He was a pitiable looking object. The life seemed to have gone from his body, and he slouched, limp and nerveless, in his chair. Turning to White, he began, in a pleading voice:

"White, listen to reason. I have given you over three thousand in the last twelve months. My father is getting suspicious. I can't ask him for any more just now. You must wait. I will pay you the entire ten thousand, as I promised, but you must wait."

"I can't wait," said the other. "I must have the money this week. People don't wait on me."

"And I must have mine by to-morrow," interjected Mrs. Frisbie. "I am going to Des Moines this week for some jewelry I ordered, and I must have the money."

Again Markley dropped his head. At last he raised his head with a look of defiance.

"Is this what you wanted to see me about to-night?" he inquired with an energy that startled both of his companions.

"Yes, and we want a positive answer," replied White firmly.

"I'll give you a positive answer," responded Markley, the color again mounting to his cheek. "I can't do it, and I won't do it! You can do your worst, but I say no!"

Markley's eyes were blazing as he shouted out the last word.

"Keep quiet, keep quiet!" said White, in a harsh whisper. "Someone may hear us. Don't yell like a madman. Now, Markley," he went on, in a cold, businesslike tone, "there is no need of a fuss. You can get the money from the old man all right. You have often done it before. Remember, I have only to whisper a few words to the sheriff and you are looking at life through a hangman's noose."

Again Markley's face paled. He sank back in his chair with a groan, and covered his face with his hands.

"Don't act foolish," said the other. "This is a matter of business with me. I don't want to make you trouble, but I want the money and must have it."

While the two men were engaged in this conversation, Mrs. Frisbie had been watching Markley with interest. When he sank back, groaning, in his chair, as though in intense pain, the woman heart within her stirred in tenderness, in spite of her degraded life, and she arose from her chair and walked over behind him.

Throwing her arms around his neck she began, in a pleading voice:

"Now, Fred, don't act so. You know your father——"

Before she could go further young Markley had leaped to his feet and brushed her off, exclaiming:

"Don't touch me, don't touch me! It is bad enough to have to listen to you."

The woman's look of tenderness turned to a glare of hatred and she slowly took her seat again.

"Well, Markley, what do you say?" White was growing impatient. "Mrs. Frisbie's family," he continued, with a contemptuous smirk at the woman, "will be looking for her to get home from the lodge."

Mr. Frisbie well knew his wife was frivolous and foolish, and becoming more so each year, but she had so far kept him in ignorance of her real life. On occasions such as this, when she had engagements of a compromising kind, she would tell him she was going to a lodge meeting, or a party of some kind. He had discovered accidentally two or three times that she had lied to him about her movements, but she always had some plausible story which kept the unfortunate man in a kind of ignorance, but he knew all was not well and his home life was a blank. His only relief was found in his little boy and girl, who had both a father's and a mother's love in the tender affection he lavished on them.

Recollections of the happy days of her previous life sometimes came to the foolish woman, but she drowned them in still greater excesses until her complete downfall seemed imminent. On this night White's sneering reference to her "family," and the evident disgust of Markley toward her,

caused her to see the tragedy of her life as she had never realizd it before.

It is told of a native woman of India that she could not be induced to wash her face, much to the disgust of her mistress, who was a Christian missionary. Finally, the mistress determined on strategy. She took another more pliable native servant, and had her face carefully washed and her hair combed and braided. Then she had the filthy-faced native and her washed fellow-servant stand together before a large mirror.

She called attention to the attractiveness of the clean native's reflection in the mirror, and said to the unwashed one: "That is your companion. She is lovely because she is clean." Then she pointed to the filthy-faced reflection, and, pointing out the foul stains and the disheveled hair, she exclaimed, in a tone of disgust: "That's you!"

It was a revelation to the unwashed Hindoo. She realized for the first time her filthiness and ran out of the room and all over the house, crying out in a frenzy: "Wash me, wash me, wash me!"

So, as in a mirror, Mrs. Frisbie saw herself as she once was, a good mother and loving wife and beside that picture she saw herself as she now was, a degraded and defiled, an untrusted and unloved woman. The awful realization maddened her.

"Don't laugh at me, you thief!" she said to White, with her eyes glittering in anger. "You are worse than Frederick Markley and you deserve the hangman's noose as much as he does, you sneaking coward!" Markley and White both stared uneasily at their companion. "You blood-

sucker," she went on to the astonished young lawyer, "your name is White, but you are as black as Satan. I know enough about you to send you to the penitentiary. Didn't you stand up and help deceive that young girl yourself, telling her you were a justice of the peace? You are equally guilty. Both of you are fit only for the gallows!" And the infuriated woman, who had worked herself into a wild passion, looked like a tigress as she poured out the vials of her wrath on the two young men.

"I have no pity for you, Frederick Markley," she went on, and Markley shuddered as she mentioned his name. "You spoiled my life and then you threw me off for that Bohemian beauty. Poor thing, I pitied her. I knew her fate. I wish I had never seen this place. I was a good woman until I came here, and met such creatures as you! If there is a God in heaven he will punish both of you yet, you scoundrels!"

"Mrs. Frisbie, Mrs. Frisbie, you forget yourself," interrupted White. "Speak lower. Someone may hear you."

"I forget nothing," replied the unhappy woman. "Ah, that will be my curse through life! I will never be able to forget. Once I was a good woman," she added with breaking voice, and then burst into tears and wept hysterically, rocking to and fro in her chair.

"Emily," said young Markley, evidently touched by the woman's distress, "I will try to get you some money to-morrow. Don't take on so."

"Money, money!" exclaimed the woman, "that's

all you have, sir, but I am through with you and your filthy money. I don't want any more. I am through. I am going back to my family to-night and I will stay with them."

As she said this, Mrs. Frisbie began to pin on her hat.

"Just one thing," she said, stopping as she was walking toward the door. "If I ever hear that either of you have said a single word against my reputation I will shoot you dead. Remember! From now on I am a woman again."

Her eyes were glittering like a basilisk's as she opened the door, walked out, and closed it with a pull behind her.

"The woman's going crazy, I believe," said White, after her footsteps on the rear stairway had died away.

"She's getting sense, I think," answered Markley gloomily. "Well, White," he went on, "I will see if I can raise another thousand this week, but I swear to you it must be the last for several months."

"I will try to be patient with you," responded White, and both of the men were glad to close the interview.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ELDER MARKLEY AND HIS SON HAVE AN INTERVIEW.

The day following the secret night meeting in Jamison White's law office Frederick Markley was walking slowly to his father's factory. The elder Markley spent several hours each day in his office at the factory, as this was now his most important and best paying business venture. The young man' mind was in a tumult. On account of his knowledge of some things in young Markley's life, Jamison White had been collecting "hush money" from him for over a year. This yoke of bondage was becoming more and more galling to the self-willed spendthrift, as his monthly allowance from his father was now altogether too small to meet his requirements, and he had to resort to various tricks to satisfy the greedy appetite of White for dollars. He had secured $3,000 from his father on various pretenses, claiming he was making investments in Western land and mines, but the shrewd elder Markley had become suspicious, and when the son secured the last thousand there had been quite a scene.

Frederick Markley well knew that a request for still another thousand that day would arouse his father's anger and lead, perhaps, to some unpleas-

ant questioning on the part of his parent. He hesitated several times and once he almost turned back.

"I can't do it!" he said to himself. "My father declared he would put up with it no longer the last time I asked him for money, and I know he will be furious to-day. I can't do it! I will tell White so." Then he remembered the threat that White had made the night before. "Curse the scoundrel!" he exclaimed, gnashing his teeth. "I am almost tempted to murder him. Mrs. Frisbie was right when she called him a "sneaking thief."

At the recollection of Mrs. Frisbie his frown darkened as he said aloud to himself: "What a mess I have made of things. I half believe Rutledge is right. This crooked life of mine is a fright. I am getting sick and tired of it.

At last he made up his mind resolutely that he must have the money, and, collecting his courage, he entered the main office of the factory and saluted the clerks.

"How are you, Mr. Markley," said Mr. Frisbie respectfully, utterly ignorant of the depression his cordial greeting caused the young man.

"Not very well to-day, Frisbie," he answered. "How is young Antol getting along?"

Frank Antol was now employed as Mr. Frisbie's assistant in the office work. He had obtained this responsible position, after his graduation from high school, through the influence of Grace Markley.

"He is a splendid office man," responded Mr. Frisbie with pride, "and I think if he keeps on, as

he has begun, he will be able to run the office himself soon."

"That's good," said young Markley absentmindedly. "Is father in?" he added, motioning toward the door of his father's private office.

"Yes, sir," replied Frank Antol. "He is all alone in the office."

Frederick Markley knocked, and then opened the door and entered. During the next fifteen minutes the clerks in the outer office could hear occasionally loud talking between the father and son, but none suspected the tragedy of the scene that was enacted.

"Hello, father!" said the young man, siting down in a chair near Elder Markley's desk. "How's business?"

"It isn't helped on any by you, sir," replied the father, evidently a little out of humor over something.

Young Markley was supposed to work in his father's office, but he did less and less, until now there was no real responsibility on him at all, and he often allowed a whole week to go past without appearing at the office once.

As the two men sat there that morning, there was a marked contrast between them. The older man was stout, square shouldered, with a strong determined face, the embodiment of will and energy. The young man was stylishly dressed, but his whole personality suggested lack of energy, and his face revealed a lamentable deficiency in will power and self-control. Indeed, his countenance had a haggard and dissipated look that

angered his father that morning as he looked at him.

"There does not seem to be much for me to do in the office since Mr. Frisbie has been given an assistant or I would be here more regularly," responded the young man, trying to say something that would get his father into a better humor.

"You are of no use anywhere, sir," said his father angrily. "I am getting disgusted with your conduct lately."

"I am no worse than usual, sir," replied the son with a little heat. "What's wrong now?"

"Well," replied the father slowly, " a number of the young men around town have been settling down to business, and giving up their foolish boyish habits, but you go on worse than ever."

"Oh, you mean my old chums that have sided in with Rutledge? Yes, they have quit, all right, but you have never advised me to pay any attention to anything that Rutledge says."

"I don't want you to be a goody-goody nobody, sir, but you ought not to disgrace yourself. You gave Rutledge an advantage over us out at the college. You ought to have been more careful.

"Why, I thought that the college squabble gave you the only chance you had to kick the fellow out of town," said the former choir leader in the Wellington Church.

"The fact that he was able to mention your name in his letter to the newspaper has made it unpleasant for me. I would begin action for slander against him, but the pesky fellow is such a

fighter I know it would only make matters worse," responded the elder in the church.

"Yes, Rutledge would likely bring out the truth," said young Markley with a wry face.

"What are you after this morning?" asked his father, turning around to him. "I am busy and have not time to spend discussing Rutledge."

"Father, I want another thousand dollars. I—"

Before he could get another word elder Markley had jumped to his feet, exclaiming:

"You won't get it, sir! I am sick and tired of your asking me for money. Here I have been toiling and working like a slave all these years to accumulate a little property, and you throw it away like dirt. Not a penny, sir, not a penny!"

"But, father, I have another investment," interrupted the son.

"Don't talk to me of investment. I know better. What investment have you ever made? Show me a single block of stock you have ever bought, or the deed to a single acre of land. Your sister, Grace, knows far more about business than you do. She keeps an account of every dollar she spends. Frank Antol, our new boy in the office, has learned more about this business in a few weeks than you learned in as many years. You must change your ways, Frederick Markley, or I will cut you adrift."

"I would like to change my ways, but I am just what you made me," answered the young man bitterly.

"Silence, sir!" shouted the thoroughly aroused parent. "Don't blame your folly on me. I set you a good example of diligence and respectability.

I am the leading man in our community and church. I had expected you to succeed me, Frederick," he added in lower tones. "I am disappointed in you."

"I am just what you made me, sir," persisted the son. "You taught me to drink wine, to gamble, to sneer at religion, to despise preachers, to spend money, and I know myself I am nothing but a failure."

"No such thing," sternly replied the elder Markley. "I taught you to drink a social glass like a gentleman and play a respectable game of cards, but I never taught you to disgrace yourself as you are doing."

Young Markley felt there was no use in following up this conversation, and he saw clearly that he must resort to desperate measures if he succeeded in securing the money for which Jamison White was hounding him.

"Father, give me one thousand this time and I swear it is the last time I will ask anything above my allowance."

The young man spoke in earnest, but he had made the same promise on the last occasion.

"I will not!" snapped out his father. "If you have any gambling debts to pay you can work and earn the money. I tell you I am through upholding you in your follies."

"Father," said young Markley, with a dangerous gleam in his eye, "what would you give to see Rutledge driven out of Wellington?"

As on a dark, cloudy day, when the sky lowers and frowns upon man, suddenly the whole face of

nature is changed in a moment when the sun emerges into a clear spot in the heavens and sends its glad light with a rush over the entire landscape, so the clouds and frowns left elder Markley's brow at the suggestion of Allan Rutledge's probable expulsion from Wellington. He sat down and faced his son again.

"What can you do to help us drive him out?" he asked, with a manner which plainly said, "Perhaps, after all, you can be of some use to me."

"I can help in keeping him here," responded the young man, "and I will do it if you refuse to give me the money I have asked."

Again, as when the sun hides itself once more and the sky lowers darker than ever, so Elder Markley's face clouded over with rage.

"What do you mean, sir?" he demanded fiercely.

"I mean what I say. If you refuse to give me a thousand dollars this morning I will attend the church convention in Des Moines, and I will swear that Rutledge was in the right. I will swear that the students were being taught to gamble in Wellington College, and it was his exposure of it in the newspapers that killed our gambling class. I will make Rutledge a hero and I won't need to perjure my soul in doing it, as you know well."

If a bombshell had exploded in his office, Elder Markley could not have been more astounded. Never before had he seen his son so wild, so desperate. Never before had he shown such contempt for his father. Accustomed to having his own way in everything, Markley's chief reason for hating Allan Rutledge was that the new minister

had a mind of his own and refused to submit to one man's dictation. But to have his son rebel against his authority in this way was a crushing blow.

As Frederick Markley watched the effect of his threat on his father, he almost repented making it. The old man gasped and gagged. His breath came in quick, short explosions. He seemed like a man on the verge of apoplexy. The color left his face. When he spoke his whole tone had changed, and in a hollow voice he asked:

"Frederick, do you mean to tell me you could think of a trick like that?"

The son was desperate. Jamison White was hounding him to the verge of despair. Conscience, hitherto a silent voice in his soul, was beginning to wake up with upbraidings. He wanted a thousand dollars from his father and he was desperate enough to have resorted to the highwayman's method, if need be, to get it. He saw his advantage over his father, and he went on in cool, measured tones:

"I mean exactly what I say. Give me a check for one thousand dollars, or I swear to God I will give Rutledge a clean bill of health before all Iowa!"

Without another word, the older man pulled out a drawer in his desk and took out a blank check book. So great was the silence in the room that the scratch of the pen could be heard distinctly as Elder Markley filled out the check for one thousand dollars and signed it. Without saying a word or

even looking in his face, he handed the check to his son.

With a wild look of triumph in his eyes, young Markley took the check in silence from his father's hand and walked out of the office. When he had gone, elder Markley sat in a daze for a full half hour. He was stunned and hardly able to comprehend just what had happened. For the first time in his life he was utterly unnerved. If his son had held him up at the point of a revolver, he could not have been more humiliated and shocked.

After a while a feeling of loneliness and grief came over him. "To think," he said to himself, "of all that I have done for the boy, and then to have him treat me like this. Frederick, Frederick, you have ruined my life!"

For several days Mrs. Markley noticed her husband's depression, but she imagined it was on account of some business reverse, and he did not confide in her the cause of his melancholy.

CHAPTER XIX.

PLOTTING A MINISTER'S DOWNFALL.

After his conversation with President Older on the Chautauqua grounds Allan Rutledge made no further attempts to reconcile the alienated college authorities. He went on with his work, quietly and effectively, and sought to make permanent the results of his Gospel meetings. In his preaching he emphasized the practical side of the Christian faith. With him religion was not a form, but a power. He made the Bible a new book even to many of the older Christians, and inculcated the idea of its practical value in common life.

He had many gratifying signs of the depth of the wave of religious zeal which had swept over the community. Family worship began to be practised once more in many families and the home life was sweetened and elevated through its influence. The recklessness of the young people was checked. Doubtful amusements regarded as dangerous to a consistent Christian life, were abandoned and became unpopular in Wellington.

One of the teachers in the public schools told him that since the religious awakening discipline was enforced in the schoolroom with no difficulty whatever whereas, previously, the inability to

keep order among the pupils had occasioned the dismissal of several well trained educators.

But, as the time for the annual Church Convention drew near, Allan had evidence on every hand that his enemies were going to make a most determined effort to drive him from Wellington. President Older had now become the open leader of the war on the successful young minister. The college president had gained over to his side the ecclesiastical "machine" of the State, for "boss rule" has cursed Church and State alike in free America.

Not content with discrediting Allan among the leaders of the Church in Iowa, President Older sought to weaken his hands by raising up opposition in the Church throughout the country. The worst blow Allan received was a letter, which came from one of his old theological professors in Boston. It was as follows:

"Boston, Mass., August 2, 190—.

"Rev. Allan Rutledge, Wellington, Iowa.

"Dear Sir: I am greatly grieved to hear that you have shown such a lack of tact and judgment as to attack one of our institutions in the West which has large vested interests. Wherever our Church has such vested interests any attack, such as you have made on Wellington College, is very wrong, as we must protect the property of the Church.

"I understand that your attack on the college has united the college forces in Wellington against you. Since this is the case, I write to advise you to resign at once, as we cannot afford, under any

circumstances, to allow our vested interests to suffer. Yours truly, Augustus Beard, D.D."

Allan read this letter tc Deacon Stanford, and found warm sympathy in the heart of the good deacon.

"Think of it!" exclaimed the deacon in righteous indignation. "That theological professor thinks more of 'vested interests' than he does of the souls and lives of men. Such clergymen as he betray the cause of our Saviour, just as Judas did!"

"No, no," replied Allan. "Dr. Beard simply does not understand the situation out here. The East has often misunderstood the West and the problems of this new country."

"Dr. Beard had a full knowledge of the situation, I am sure," persisted the deacon. "The trouble is that he is one of these men who think that dollars are of more value than people, and yet he pretends to be a follower of Jesus. He does not say a word about the success of your work in the church."

Allan sighed and made no reply. He was, indeed, astonished to find so little sympathy in his earnest work for righteousness. Many of his brother ministers seemed glad of the opportunity to overthrow him. He heard of a minister in a neighboring town who had preached a sermon on "False Evangelism," and who even went so far as to say:

"There is that man, Rutledge, the most talked-of man in Iowa at present. He will soon leave Wellington and never be heard of again. We want

a quiet evangelism, which does not disturb the peace and harmony of the Church."

This minister's name was Dr. Warren Miller. He was the pastor of an important church and was a close friend of President Older.

Not long after Frederick Markley had given his father such a stunning blow in the interview, in which the son compelled elder Markley, under threats, to give him a thousand dollars, these two influential leaders in the Church in Iowa met for a conference.

It was almost time for the annual Church Convention and they met to mature their plans. During their conversation President Older remarked:

"Something has come over Markley recently. He seems to have lost interest in our efforts to rid ourselves of this Rutledge. I asked him to come with me to-day, but he refused."

"What's the matter?" asked Dr. Miller, in alarm. "Rutledge has not hypnotized him, too, has he? Surely after slandering his son, as Rutledge did, Mr. Markley will continue to fight him!"

"I certainly hope so," responded President Older, "but something has made him lose interest lately. He used to come and see me almost every day, and he was intensely bitter against Rutledge, but last Sunday he was out at church again."

"Was he actually at church?" exclaimed Dr. Miller. "That is too bad. I am afraid some influences are at work which we must counteract."

Ah, be careful, Dr. Warren Miller! Influences are at work, as powerful as Niagara and as constant as gravitation, which neither you nor the

strongest man on earth can counteract. The law of the harvest is beginning to make itself felt in Wellington. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For many years Elder Markley has been sowing to the wind. He is now about to reap the whirlwind. He has sown a selfish, self-centered life. He is about to reap his awful harvest in accordance with the unchanging law of the universe.

"My wife was at church last Sunday," continued President Older, "and she said that elder Markley listened most attentively to the sermon. Rutledge was preaching on the Prodigal Son, and, once or twice, she thought she saw Markley weeping. We must do something, or I fear Rutledge will win him over."

"I will write him a letter," said Dr. Miller. "I think I can stir him up again. If we have his help in the convention I am sure we can give Rutledge what he deserves."

Accordingly, a day or two after this, Elder Markley received the following letter from Dr. Warren Miller:

"My Dear Markley: I was so sorry you could not come with President Older to-day. We have arranged all our plans to remove Rutledge from Wellington by a vote of the Convention. We feel it is due to you, as well as to the college, that we disgrace him as far as we can, for he has dragged your son's good name in the mire all through the State by mentioning him in connection with his slanderous attack on Wellington College. Be sure to be present at the Conven-

tion, as we need your help. Rutledge is a clever politician, and he may outwit us if we are not on our guard. Yours cordially,

"Warren Miller, D.D."

Elder Markley read this letter with little interest. He seemed to have lost his mental grip on things. A shock to the mind and heart stuns a man like a blow on the head. He had not spoken half a dozen words to his son since that fatal morning. Frederick Markley went around heedless and defiant, most of the time plainly under the influence of liquor. But if elder Markley had ceased his active campaign on the minister others were busy.

Deacon Stanford came to see Allan one morning in a state of high excitement.

"I have just heard, Mr. Rutledge," he exclaimed, with sparkling eye, "that President Older, Dr. Miller, Dr. Oudrey and some other prominent Iowa clergymen have it all arranged to remove you from Wellington at the Convention without so much as asking a vote from the congregation. It is outrageous, sir! These men may call themselves ministers of Christ, but they act like agents of the devil. No wonder preachers are getting a bad name when a lot of them will treat you as they do. I call it an outrage on common decency, to say nothing about Christianity," and Deacon Stanford brought his hand down with a bang on Allan's desk.

"Have you heard anything lately?" asked Allan calmly.

"Yes, just this morning Mr. Daniels told me all

about it. They think he is still your enemy, but ever since the night of the fire he has been your warmest friend. President Older is at the bottom of it, though I blame Elder Markley too. Poor Markley! something seems wrong with him. I think he is worried over his son, Frederick. The young man is going down hill fast this summer."

"What can we do?" asked Allan, with complete composure.

"I know what I am going to do. I am going to call on Markley to-morrow at his office and have a square talk with him. Dr. Lucas and some of us have decided these college fellows have gone as far as we are going to let them."

"I am going to hold a memorial service for Louis Antoine at Markley's factory to-morrow at noon," responded Allan, "and I was going to invite you to be present. The men arranged it themselves. They will meet outside in the shade of the trees. Markley's men and the firemen, with their families, will be present and I look for a good meeting. I want you to come as a representative of Wellington Church, and perhaps you can see Mr. Markley afterward."

"Just the thing," replied the deacon. "Poor Antoine! We miss him. He had become a great help in the church among his own people, the Bohemians. You know they are hard to reach, but Antoine was getting them one by one."

"I will try to do justice to his memory," said the minister. "Such men are heroes, as worthy of praise as John Huss or Martin Luther. And don't trouble about my enemies," added Allan.

"It may be best for you to see Markley, but I am sure the Convention will not blindly follow the leadership of President Older in this matter. God still has something to say in regard to the affairs of his Church on earth."

"These men who are fighting you leave God out altogether," responded the deacon, his indignation rising again. "I don't wonder there are so many infidels when preachers act as these men are doing."

"It will come out all right, never fear," said Allan confidently. "The Church is not perfect, and I am beginning to see that some of the leaders in the Church have strange ideas of right and wrong, but God's Church will be purified and God's work among men carried on in spite of the presence of the modern Judas and Ananias. The unhung Judas and the unexposed Ananias will soon be brought to confusion. God has surely blessed us in the Wellington Church, and we must not grieve him by doubting his care and guidance."

His tone of assurance gave Deacon Stanford new confidence and he answered earnestly: "Mr. Rutledge, you are right. I am confident you will win. However, I will see Markley to-morrow after your memorial service."

When Deacon Stanford went away, Allan pondered long and earnestly on the attitude of President Older and the other leading ministers toward him.

"It is war to the knife, and knife to the hilt with them, I very plainly see," he said to himself, "but I am right, and if a man in the right is cast

out, I will go gladly, for I prefer a prison with the right rather than a palace with the wrong. I shall talk plainly in the Convention, and if my fellow-ministers stand up for the college, when the college is in the wrong, I am done with their fellowship, for I will then know that the charges against the Church, which we hear on every hand, are true. I will know the Church is an effete institution, and I shall go outside the camp with Christ, bearing his reproach."

Having thus resolved, Allan gave himself to the preparation of his memorial address for the next day.

The men in the paint shop had arranged for the services. They were to be held on the large vacant spot on the east side of the factory, where there was good shade from a number of large oak trees. The families of the men were to be present, and a great crowd was expected.

"Poor Louis!" said Pat McGinnis in the paint shop the day previous to this memorial service just about the time Deacon Stanford and Allan Rutledge were talking together. "Poor Louis! he well desarves the honor. His rivirince has asked me to spake a word about his last farewell. I'll try to do it, but I'm afeared I'll break down."

"Did you ask Mr. Markley and the men in the office to be present?" asked Foreman McGregor.

"I did, begorra," replied the Irishman, "and they tould me they would be there, shure. The boss said he was glad we were going to have such a sarvice."

"Mr. Rutledge wants the men from the paint

shop to sit on the platform with him," went on the foreman.

"That's all right," one of the men rejoined. "None of them miss Antoine as we do."

And so this strange service was arranged for. It meant more than appeared on the surface. It meant that these humble foreign toilers in the factory had begun to appreciate their own worth. When a Senator dies, especially if he dies in some heroic way, his fellow-Senators do him honor in a public manner. So these factory men, under the inspiration of Allan Rutledge's teaching, had begun to see the worth and grandeur of man as man, and when a true man, like Louis Antoine, died as a hero, doing his duty, the desire to honor his memory was spontaneous.

Some of the supercilious in Wellington sniffed at the idea of making so much ado over a "Bohemian painter," but the majority of the people looked with a new respect on these humble workers, who showed their appreciation of genuine worth when it appeared among themselves, without any of the tinsel of earth.

The day of the memorial service was long remembered, for some startling results came from the meeting.

CHAPTER XX.

EVERY MAN'S SOUL A KINGDOM.

"Bhoys, he tould me to say good-by to ye, and to say that he was ready to go and that he died a Christian."

There was a break in the voice of Pat McGinnis as he delivered the last message of Louis Antoine at the memorial service. The service was held in the open air, on a green, shaded, open space beside the factory. It was a thrilling sight to see the great crowd of toilers and their families, fringed with a number of other citizens, gathered together to do honor to the memory of a Bohemian painter.

On the rude platform, along with the minister, Rev. Allan Rutledge, were the workmen from the paint shop, including Steen, the converted Englishman, who had been given Antoine's place at the request of Grace Markley. Most of the men were in their rough, working clothes, but the families were dressed in their best fashion.

Among the audience Allan saw Elder Markley and his daughter, Grace, Deacon Stanford and a number of the members of the church. Mr. and Mrs. Frisbie were seated a little to the left of the platform, not far from the front. Allan noticed

them at once and he was touched with the mournful look on Mrs. Frisbie's face. She had attended the church service on the previous Sabbath, and had heard the sermon on the "Prodigal Son," which had appealed to Elder Markley. That oft-told story had also found a lodgment in her heart, and Mr. Frisbie had strange feelings as he saw his hitherto frivolous wife weeping during the sermon. She had proposed attending the memorial service, much to her husband's delight.

After Pat McGinnis had given Antoine's last message to his fellow-workers, Allan asked the audience to sing, and, leading them himself, they all joined in singing the hymn:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love."

They sang it with a ring of sincerity in their voices which amply atoned for any lack of musical culture.

The nature of the service, the strange surroundings, the influence of a meeting held in God's great out-of-doors, all conspired to make the occasion unusually impressive.

The minister had felt his responsibility and had thoroughly prepared himself. If he had been invited before our National Congress to deliver an oration at a memorial service there, in honor of a statesman of world-wide renown, he could not have shown more respect for his audience, or prepared more carefully his address. He began in his usual quiet way, supplementing the few re-

marks made by Pat McGinnis, and declaring that he felt honored to be asked to speak on such an occasion.

"We are here to do honor to a man," he went on to say, while the people listened with rapt attention, "who gave his life in devotion to his duty. It was a part of the new life which Louis Antoine had begun to live, for he joined the volunteer fire department after his conversion. Often he told me, with regret, of his old life, which he had lived as a blasphemer and infidel, but he used to say, with great pathos: 'I obtaind pardon because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.' Our hero became the true man he was when he first came to know the Lord Jesus. You all know the change that passed over his life. He was like an open book, known and read of all men. He lived in the sunlight."

As Allan spoke in this way of their comrade the men seemed to take on a new sense of dignity. Amid intense stillness, the minister continued: "In honoring true worth, wherever it is found, men show themselves divine. When the apostles saw through the poverty and humiliation that surrounded the earthly life of our Lord Jesus, and fastened their eyes in wonder and praise upon the spotless character and noble soul of their Master, they proved their own worthiness. In spite of the contempt heaped upon their Lord by the learned and great of that age, they bowed their hearts in humble reverence before him, and the world has since held these apostles in honor as first among men.

"So to-day we reverence Louis Antoine. He

was a man. Nay, he was a king, a true king, for every man's soul is a kingdom, and the man who rules that kingdom well is a king, whether he is crowned or uncrowned. Let the life and death of Louis Antoine teach us all self-reverence. The highest things in life are possible for every one of you. You can all be kings and queens, and your children can be princes and princesses.

"Oh, that men and women knew their own worth!" exclaimed the speaker, as his eye ran over the crowd of artisans before him. "They would hold themselves in reverence and would not sell their souls so cheaply. Abraham Lincoln lives to-day in the heart of humanity as worthy of all honor because his soul was without price. He could not be bought. All the pleasures, honors, fame and riches of the world could not have purchased his integrity.

"What a tragedy we see," he continued, "when men and women despise their heavenly birthright and sell out their souls for a mess of pottage. When self-respect is gone, how fearful the sight, whether the man is a crowned king, like Ahab, or a jeweled queen, like Cleopatra."

As he uttered these words in deep earnestness and sincerity, a stillness was over the crowd. The sound of a passing wagon on a distant street was distinctly audible. The eyes of all were fastened on him, but amid the crowd of faces he could clearly distinguish two, Mrs. Frisbie and Elder Markley. He could see they were listening with a pathetic eagerness.

"I mourn to-day," the speaker concluded, "on

my own account, for Antoine was a valued friend. I loved him as a brother in Christ. I honored him as a man with a passion for righteousness. I reverenced him as a king, who ruled well the kingdom of his own soul. Let us hold such men in reverence. Let us keep their memory green. In doing this we honor ourselves."

The people sat still for several moments after he had ceased speaking and had closed the service. Then they quietly began to disperse. The visitors and the wives and children wended their ways to their homes in silence.

In a few moments the factory whistle blew and the men went back to work. But a close observer would have seen a calmer, steadier look in the men's eyes, a nobler bearing in their walk, and more manliness in their whole carriage after the unusual memorial service.

Elder Markley had gone at once to his office when the services ended, and was sitting with his head bowed on the desk when a knock came to the door.

"Come in!" he said, rousing himself.

The door opened and Deacon Stanford entered.

"How are you, Mr. Markley?" he asked him in greeting, as he advanced with outstretched hand. "I must congratulate you on the fine body of workmen that you have. That was a grand service and I understand your men got it up themselves."

"Yes, yes," said the other absent-mindedly, "my men have given me very little trouble in the last few months."

"I think I know the reason," rejoined Deacon Stanford, anxious to begin the conversation on the topic which he had come to discuss. "The story of Louis Antoine has been the story of many of your men since Mr. Rutledge came to Wellington."

Elder Markley was silent.

"I called to see you to-day," went on the deacon, plunging into the matter next his heart, "in regard to this fight which President Older and some others are making on our minister. Don't you think it is high time that that thing was stopped?"

Still the elder was silent.

"I have heard that it is all arranged," continued Deacon Stanford, with rising voice, "to have the annual Convention remove Mr. Rutledge from our church. Have you heard anything about it?"

Elder Markley roused himself. The old, bitter sparkle came into his eye. His old nature began to reassert itself.

"I don't think anyone can blame President Older for opposing Rutledge," he said, with more spirit than he had shown since his son's visit to him several days before.

"Patience ceases to be a virtue, sir!" responded the deacon. "I am entirely out of patience with President Older in this matter. Has not Mr. Rutledge brought a new life and a new spirit to our community? Anyone can see it. Look at that service we have just attended. Would such a thing have been dreamed of a year ago?"

Markley again lapsed into silence, and the deacon, with his blood stirred to righteous indignation, went on:

"There are scores of parents whose boys and girls were in danger who are rejoicing to-day because we have a minister who boldly teaches God's truth and condemns sin outright. Except your own son, there is hardly one of our young men but has turned over a new leaf and become a pride to his parents. If you had acted differently toward our new minister, I am sure Mr. Rutledge could have influenced Frederick. I often saw him much affected during the first few weeks that Mr. Rutledge was with us. He is worse than ever now, and you are to blame."

Deacon Stanford was not cruel, but he was aroused that day, and he had no idea what a wound he was making in Elder Markley's heart. As the deacon finished Elder Markley turned toward him, his face pale and full of pain and grief.

"Deacon Stanford," he almost moaned, "I did not think you were the man to mock a father who well knows the faults of his son and regrets them bitterly."

As he spoke Elder Markley put his face in his hands, and his long, pent-up emotion gave way at last in bitter tears.

"What's the matter, friend Markley?" said the deacon, at length, in a sympathetic voice, putting his hand on Markley's shoulder.

"My boy, my boy!" moaned the stricken parent.

"What has Frederick been doing now?" asked Deacon Stanford, in alarm.

Unable longer to keep his grief and disappointment to himself, Elder Markley related to the dea-

con his son's grievous act of rebellion, which had culminated in an entire break between the two.

"I don't know what to do," he added pathetically. "He is entirely beyond my control. I never expected a son of mine to turn out a wreck as he has."

Elder Markley had had good New England training. He was greedy, grasping and selfish, but his personal habits had always been free from any taint of viciousness, and he had prided himself on the respectability of his family. He had suddenly awakened to find himself on the verge of a precipice. He was not sorry for anything in his own life and did not blame himself at all, but he was mortified to the quick to see his son such a scandalous failure in life.

"Markley," said his friend gravely, "you have not given your son a fair chance. I remember when I thought Frederick Markley was one of the most promising boys in Wellington. You have been too lax with him, and you have spoiled him with overindulgence. Frederick is not naturally vicious. He may yet be saved."

"I acknowledge," answered the humiliated father, "I have been too generous in giving him money to squander, but outside of that I have trained him for a respectable life."

The deacon shook his head, but made no reply. He did not want to add to Markley's grief, but in his own mind he was convinced that Elder Markley was responsible for his son's failure to a very large degree.

"You are not going to Des Moines, then?" said Deacon Stanford, when he was about to leave.

"No," replied Elder Markley. "I have no heart for anything. Perhaps Rutledge is the man for this place after all, though I have had little use up to this time for the man or his preaching. If he could only help Frederick—" And the father again bowed his head in his hands.

"Friend Markley," said the kind-hearted deacon, with a tear in his eye, "trust in God. I feel sure Mr. Rutledge can reach Frederick since you have ceased to oppose him. A boy with a sister like Grace Markley cannot surely be beyond redemption."

"Thank you, Mr. Stanford, you have done me good. Grace is a noble girl. I have never appreciated her before. If in any way I can help Frederick to be a man again I want to do it."

The men shook hands warmly, and Deacon Stanford walked out of the office, assured that he could now defeat any trick of President Older in the Convention.

"Our church is now unanimous," he said to himself. "It is President Older who will leave Wellington, or I miss my guess."

While this conversation was going on in Markley's office, another tragic scene was being enacted in one of the Wellington's homes. After he had returned from the memorial service, Allan Rutledge sat for a little while in meditation. He was aroused by a loud knocking at the door, and, hurrying downstairs, he found Mr. Frisbie standing there in a state of great excitement.

"Come to my house at once, Mr. Rutledge! We need you," he said, without an introductory word. Allan at once got his hat and they walked rapidly down the street in the direction of the Frisbie home.

"What's wrong now, Mr. Frisbie?" he asked, as they hurried along.

"I don't know," answered the man in great agitation. "My wife was much affected during the memorial service, but I did not think very much about it. As soon as she got home she telephoned for me. I went home from the office as fast as I could and found her crying and wringing her hands. She asked me to take the children to a neighbor's and get you at once. I can't understand it."

Allan was silent. He suspected the cause of Mrs. Frisbie's collapse, but he said nothing. When they reached the home they found the unfortunate woman rocking wildly in her chair, crying out again and again:

"Why did I do it? Why did I do it?"

"Here is Mr. Rutledge," said her husband. "Tell him what is wrong."

The woman stopped her rocking for an instant and looked at the minister. Then she hid her face in her hands and broke out in a wail of despair. Allan's heart was touched. Here was a real penitent.

"Mrs. Frisbie," he said gently, sitting down opposite her, "tell us what is on your mind."

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" she cried, as in a frenzy.

"Don't be afraid," urged the minister. "We

both want to help you, but we can do nothing unless you tell us what is wrong."

The woman made no reply, except to moan.

"Come, Emily," said her husband kindly, "don't be afraid to tell us anything. There is something you ought to tell. Speak out. Anything you may say to Mr. Rutledge and me now is sacred."

"Can you forgive me?" she cried. "Oh, husband, tell me, can you forgive me! Oh, sir," she almost shrieked, addressing Mr. Rutledge, "will God forgive me? Will he ever forgive?"

"God forgave David when he sinned," said the minister, knowing well the cause of the awful bitterness in the woman's soul. "Jesus forgave the woman who was a sinner. He will forgive you if you ask him."

Mr. Frisbie tried to soothe and calm his wife.

"I have been forgiven myself," he said tenderly to her. "I can forgive you if you have wronged me."

Gradually the woman became calmer. Then came her confession. She did not incriminate any others, but she blamed the dance and the church choir for her conduct.

"Before you came, Mr. Rutledge," she said, amid sobs which shook her whole body, "that church choir was a school for sin. It was awful—awful. I could tell more, but I only confess my own sins."

"My God, are such things possible!" exclaimed the minister, as he bowed his head in shame.

Poor Mr. Frisbie. As he realized the full meaning of his wife's confession, he sank limp and helpless into a chair and moaned as though stricken

with mortal agony. It was well that the minister was present.

He spoke to both words of comfort and hope. He told how the past was dead and the future was theirs to make it a success.

"But I can't forget," moaned the still unhappy woman.

"God will help you as the days go past. You are not the first to sin. Trust God for the future," said Allan encouragingly.

Before they left they all knelt in prayer, and each of them prayed.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Frisbie broke down and finished their prayers with sobs, but God heard the cry of their hearts.

Allan Rutledge was the last to pray. He never prayed so earnestly in all his life before. He prayed that the sin might be forgiven and the home purified and rededicated to Christ. He prayed for the husband, wife and children, naming each of them in his fervent petition. He commended them all to the good Father who receives every returning wanderer back into his arms of love.

Then he left them alone with God, to renew their vows to him and to each other.

CHAPTER XXI.

A FISHING TRIP.

"I must have a day in God's great out-of-doors," said Allan to himself a few days after the memorial services at the Markley factory.

The annual Convention at Des Moines met the following week and he wanted to be at his best on that occasion. He well knew it would be the crisis of his life. If the Convention removed him from Wellington it would be a staggering blow to his whole future. In the modern church those who incur the enemity of the ruling churchmen are not burned at the stake, as John Huss and Hugh Latimer were. They are not even imprisoned, as such men were in the times of John Bunyan and George Fox.

But that does not mean that modern churchmen cannot inflict punishment. It was in the power of that annual Convention to put a blighting brand on Rev. Allan Rutledge, that only the Judgment Day could wipe out, and Allan well knew that the leaders of the ecclesiastical "machine" were as anxious to brand him, as Latimer's enemies were to burn the uncompromising English preacher. The high pitch of excitement to which almost every day he had been keyed since his re-

turn from the old farm was beginning to tell on him.

"Fishing in an Iowa stream in the summer time is a huge joke," he said to himself aloud, "but a fishing trip will be an excuse for me to get into the country for a long walk."

Accordingly, he took his fishing outfit and started down the railroad track to Elm Creek, a stream that flowed through a beautiful wooded valley, about four miles south of Wellington. He was dressed in a light outing suit, and in spite of the warmth of that August morning, he was soon a mile out of the city. Here he entered a thick grove, through which the railroad wound with two or three sharp curves. The longest of these curves was called the "bend" by the natives. As Allan neared his "bend," he noticed a figure ahead of him. It was a man walking up the track slowly toward him, with his head bowed and an air of dejection in his every movement. Allan started as he recognized Frederick Markley. With lowered head, deep in thought the former choir leader of the Wellington Church ambled slowly along so preoccupied that he did not hear Allan's footsteps until the minister was almost upon him.

Allan regarded the young man closely as he approached him. He had not met him since the eventful night at Wellington College and he was surprised to note the changes in him since that time. His face was pale, haggard and drawn. His entire mien was dejected, utterly unlike the bold Frederick Markley he had met at the station when he first arrived in Wellington less than a

year before. The minister's heart smote him. Perhaps he had been too severe. This young man was a brother to Grace Markley, and he plainly needed help. Allan decided to meet the young man in the friendliest way.

"Hello!" he said frankly, as young Markley at last heard his footfall and looked up with a quick, startled, frightened glance. "A fine morning, Mr. Markley," the minister continued. "I just had to get some country air to-day, and I am going on a fishing expedition to Elm Creek."

But the blood-shot eyes of Frederick Markley gave no response to the minister's cordial greeting. Allan could see that the young man was partly under the influence of liquor.

"Rutledge," he replied, with an unsteady glare in his eyes, "I have not met you since that night at the college. I want to settle that matter. I challenge you to a duel, sir."

"Forgive me, Mr. Markley if I acted rudely that night. I was excited," answered the minister, speaking with great earnestness. "I also wanted to see you about mentioning your name in my article in the 'Gazette.' I have already told your sister, as you know, that I regretted it," Allan went on. "I was too hasty, but, Mr. Markley, you know we all make mistakes. I want to be your friend."

The minister's reply was so unexpecetd that it almost dazed young Markley for a moment. He made no reply, but stared in astonishment at Allan.

"I mean what I say," he continued. "I am in

Wellington to help everyone who needs any help I can give, and I think I can be of service to you, if you will only let me."

His kind tone made an impression. Just before they met Frederick Markley had been cursing his fate that he was so friendless. Even his father had apparently cast him off. To hear the man whom he had looked upon as his bitter enemy speak as Allan Rutledge had spoken unmanned him. The depths of his nature were broken up.

"Sir," he said to the minister, with a terrible earnestness that Allan never forgot, "I never had a chance in life. I was brought up to have my own way in everything and taught by my own father to drink. His money has ruined me. I once believed as my sister does, but now all is gone."

There was a hopelessness in his voice that was pathetic. Allan's heart gave a bound. Out of hopelessness like this comes the victory of faith. Perhaps he could win a new convert to the Christian faith, and that convert Grace's brother.

"Frederick," he began, in a kind, sympathetic voice, laying his hand on his shoulder, "I am much interested in you. You could be a power for good in Wellington, just as your sister is, if you will accept your sister's faith and begin to lead a Christian life. If you do this your influence will be tremendous. Can't you leave sin and live for God?"

The young man hesitated. Allan saw that he was trembling like a leaf. The destiny of his soul seemed to hang in the balance.

"Decide aright. There is only one way for a

man to live," persisted the minister, feeling that Frederick Markley's salvation was at hand.

"It is too late, too late!" at length he answered in a despairing tone.

"It is never too late," said the minister earnestly. "The past can be blotted out."

The young man looked around him with a look of agony, as he exclaimed: "My past cannot be blotted out! It is too late, too late!"

With these words young Markley turned, and walked rapidly up the track toward Wellington.

Allan's first impulse was to follow him, but he was assured that reflection would lead the now penitent man into the truth, and he determined to see him again as soon as he could. Little did he dream under what circumstances he would confront Frederick Markley again.

By the time he reached Elm Creek, Allan was glad to seek the shade of a friendly elm and rest under its plumelike foliage. Arranging his fishing tackle, he began his sport as a disciple of Isaak Walton and Henry van Dyke. But fishing at that season in an Iowa stream was what Allan called it—a "joke." It is useless to try the fly, on account of the muddy bottoms, and the fish seem to have ample food supply from the rich river banks without troubling a fisherman's dangerous bait. Allan was glad to hear someone coming up the bank of the creek and he was anticipating a pleasant visit with some rustic, when the brush parted and Dr. Lucas stood before him.

"You, doctor!" exclaimed Allan. "I thought I

was going to see a horny-handed son of toil and here it is a truant physician."

"Glad to meet a truant preacher this morning, I assure you," responded the doctor heartily. "I just couldn't keep up the farce of pretending to fish any longer and I was looking for some excitement. How I wish we had a mountain stream within walking distance of Wellington. Wouldn't this be an ideal country if we had?"

"Let us sit down, doctor, and have a chat. This is a delightful spot. How healing nature is! Your pharmacopœia is an impertinence compared with a day on Elm Creek."

"I know it, I know it!" laughed the doctor. "I never take my own medicine. I get out my fishing rod and hike down here when I need some recuperation."

"Aren't you afraid to leave your patients lest they get better?" said Allan, with a smile.

"Patients!" exclaimed the doctor. "Where are my patients? This Iowa climate is so healthy in the summer time that all we doctors have to do is to sit in our offices and twirl our thumbs. It is my worst objection to Iowa."

"That is bad for the doctors, isn't it?" responded Allan.

"If it were not for an occasional wet spring, we doctors are a superfluity out here most of the time," went on Dr. Lucas.

"When we need you, we want you right quick, however, so be patient, dear doctor and we will be your patients as often as we can't help it."

"I am glad to see you so strong and well again,

Mr. Rutledge," said the doctor in a more serious tone. "There was a while last spring when I thought that your trouble with the college was going to get on your nerves and make a wreck of you."

"My visit to the old farm made a man of me again," said Allan.

"Do you know what I think of that whole college affair?" asked the doctor.

"What's on your mind?" rejoined the minister.

"I think that President Older and those other fellows that are hounding you are in pretty poor business. They are jealous of your success and their only desire is to humiliate you. They care nothing about the real prosperity of either our church or college. President Older's administration at the college has been a flat failure. They are like dogs in a manger. If they cannot do something themselves, they are determined that no one else shall."

"Don't you think that that is rather a severe diagnosis?" said Allan, smiling.

"No, sir! Those men are of small caliber and they have the big head. Men, as well as horses, get that disease. That is our great trouble with the Church in America to-day! Often these petty ecclesiastical politicians get into places of influence and they try to hold their power by any and every means. I have watched the thing for a good many years. It is disgusting to a man who knows what real Christian leadership ought to be. Instead of being eager to deny themselves for the sake of the kingdom of God on earth, as Paul was,

these fellows are as ambitious for personal honor and glory as Pilate, and, like Pilate, they often crucify Christ rather than endanger in any way their own prospects for worldly glory."

Allan was silent, finding nothing to say in opposition to the doctor's argument. Judged by the standards of the New Testament, President Older, Dr. Warren Miller and his other avowed ministerial enemies were much more Pilatelike than Christlike.

Late in the afternoon the two friends walked home along the railroad track. When they came to the "bend," where Allan and young Markley had met in the morning, the minister referred to the incident and told the doctor of the conversation he had with Elder Markley's son.

"Poor fellow!" said Allan. "I feel sorry for him. His feet are slipping and he has begun to realize it."

"I am sorry for him, too," said the doctor. "I blame Elder Markley more than I do the boy. I well remember Fred as a little fellow. I thought he was going to become a fine man, but he has had no chance. Markley is like a lot of other parents these days. He has been so busy getting money that he has had no time for anything else, and now he is beginning to see how his money is not much comfort with a son like Frederick. The old man is all broken up lately, and I believe he has begun to realize his son's condition."

"It is too bad!" commented the minister.

Just then the doctor stopped. Taking out his handkerchief, he mopped his brow, and, pointing

to the bank along the track, he said: "There is where poor Viola Antol committed suicide. It is just a little over a year ago since it happened. It was the shock of her death that killed Dr. Anning. He was never the same man after her funeral. It was the saddest thing I ever knew. I could as soon have believed that Dr. Anning himself would have fallen away as that Viola would have gone astray."

"Some seem to doubt if it was really suicide, after all," said Allan.

"Yes, I remember there was some gossip at the time, but there could be no doubt. It was her father's gun which was found by her side."

There was no more mention of the unfortunate Bohemian girl, but Allan felt in his soul that the tragedy of her death was not yet ended.

"Mr. Rutledge," went on the doctor, as they left the fatal "bend," "I want to assure you of the reality of the religious revival which you have brought to Wellington. A doctor always knows the real life of any community, and I can bear witness that Wellington is really transformed. The social conditions here had become shocking, but it is altogether different now."

"I am truly glad," responded the minister with a suspicion of moisture in his eyes, "if I have been of any service to this community. I have suffered something in Wellington, but that is nothing if real good has been accomplished."

The next week Allan Rutledge went to the annual convention at Des Moines. This convention was controlled by men who despised him as

a "religious enthusiast," while they viewed with bitter jealousy his remarkable success as a minister of the Gospel.

Allan Rutledge and the ecclesiastical "machine" of Iowa were to meet in mortal combat. Which would be the victor? The conflict seemed as unequal as the long remembered struggle between David and Goliath, and many of God's servants in Iowa trembled for the young Wellington pastor, just as many a godly Israelite trembled then for the youthful shepherd of Bethlehem.

CHAPTER XXII.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

What is daintier than a maiden's room? The whole scene is one of delicacy, beauty and grace. A young man's room is as different from a girl's as a blustering March day from a zephyr-caressed evening in June.

Miss Mabel Grayson sat in her own room one morning amid the charming surroundings of such a retreat, her own loveliness enhanced by her exquisite environments. But a look of perplexity was on her fair face, and her head rested on her hand. She had just read a letter from Grace Markley. It was not as long as the epistle she had received some time before, telling of the fortunes of Allan Rutledge. Nor did this letter have very much to say directly about the young Wellington minister. But a sentence or two in it made a queer sensation in Mabel Grayson's heart.

"Oh, Mabel," the letter had said, in part, "I am so happy to-day. This morning I answered the most important question a woman can answer. I want to tell you all about it, but I cannot write. Come and see me soon."

It was these words that made Mabel's heart feel like lead in a moment. Of course, she had ex-

pected it. Even during the delightful visit with Allan Rutledge on the Des Moines River, Mabel never allowed herself to forget that Grace Markley and Allan were close friends, and that Grace already looked on Allan as something more than a mere friend. Allan's trouble had aroused in her the mother-heart, an element in every woman's nature, and her desire to see him throw off every care during his vacation led her to a freedom in his company that otherwise she would not have enjoyed during those July days in the country.

Since those eventful days at the "camp," Mabel had resumed her correspondence with Allan, but in a more reserved way than before, which reserve he had noticed and wondered at. Mabel, for some reason, disliked to write frankly to Grace Markley about her relationship to the young minister, and her letters to her Wellington cousin were not as frank and cordial as they had been. Utterly ignorant of Mabel's feelings, Grace wrote freely about Allan, and, as they were much associated in charitable work of various kinds, Mabel was certain that their companionship was constant, and that Grace had gained completely the heart of the man she referred to so often in her letters.

This letter which Mabel Grayson held in her hand on this particular morning was the announcement at last that Grace and Allan were engaged. So Mabel Grayson thought. But plainly it was still a private engagement, as Grace did not even wish to write about it, but merely hinted at the all-important event. Mabel Grayson felt that the confidence was sacred and she must not say any-

thing about it until Grace had given her full permission.

"Oh, I see now what he meant!" said Mabel to herself, as she picked up another letter which she had also received that morning from Wellington, and which, to her astonishment, when she read it, began, "My Dearest Mabel." The three last letters of the middle word were used in this letter for the first time by the young minister in addressing the daughter of Judge Grayson. When she had read this tender word, raised by him to the superlative power for the first time in writing to her, she had blushed and her heart had throbbed so violently that she had to labor to get her breath.

"I understand it now," she went on, speaking aloud, although there was no one to hear. "He thinks I am to be his cousin now and so he calls me 'Dearest.' He will soon write 'Dearest Cousin,' I suppose," and as she spoke the color left her face.

"Why should I care?" at last she exclaimed. "I must write to-day and congratulate my cousin. I am sure she will be happy as Allan Rutledge's wife."

Accordingly, she wrote an answer to Grace, which surprised that young lady very much. "I congratulate you on your engagement," Mabel wrote. "I am sure you will be happy as his wife."

"How did she know whom I promised to marry?" said Grace to herself, in astonishment, as she read the letter, but thinking that perhaps in some way Mabel had found out her secret she thanked her cousin for her kind wishes.

But Mabel Grayson was miserable. Her father could notice a lull in her gay laughter, and he was fearful she was not well. He found her one day in his library, with a book on her lap and her hands over her face, weeping silently.

"What's the matter, my child?" he asked gently. "What has happened to you lately? Why are you crying?"

"I was reading this book, 'The Story of Ann Rutledge,'" she replied, in some confusion. "I got it at the bookstore yesterday, and poor Ann's sad fate made me weep. Did you ever read the story, father?" she asked, so pathetically that her father looked at her earnestly.

"I never read much about it," answered the Judge, "but I remember there was something about a love affair between Abraham Lincoln and some such person when Lincoln was a young man."

"Yes," said his daughter. "In this book it tells the whole story. Poor Ann died of a broken heart. She was Allan Rutledge's great-aunt. Did I ever tell you?"

"No," responded the Judge, in surprise. "Is that so? I am more interested than ever in that young man. His case comes up at the Convention which meets to-morrow. I understand his enemies have full confidence that they can drive him out of Wellington."

"Drive him out of Wellington!" said Mabel. "What do you mean, papa?"

"Well, his attack on the college in the newspapers has given some of his jealous fellow-minis-

ters an opportunity, as they think, to humiliate him, and they are going to make the most of it."

Mabel Grayson dried her tears.

"Are any of our ministers so contemptible?" she asked her father, sitting up straight and looking him in the face.

"My daughter," answered the Judge gravely, "I desire you always to reverence the ministry of the Gospel, which is one of God's best gifts to his Church. True ministers devote themselves wholly to God's work in the spirit of their Master, and seek each other's honor rather than their own. But we cannot deny that self-seeking, worldly-minded men have intruded themselves into the ranks of the ministry, and I regret to say that present-day circumstances in this new Western country give such men an opportunity to domineer often over the faithful servants of Christ in the Church. But the power of such false ministers in Iowa will be broken in this coming convention, or I have not read aright the signs of the times. Allan Rutledge is destined to do a great work for the ministry of our whole State, as well as revive the Wellington Church and purify the college there."

"What will he do?" asked Mabel, with wide open eyes.

"He will expose the spirit of these men who are at present controlling the Church in this State, and when the rank and file of our faithful Iowa ministers and Christian workers see what kind of men President Older, Dr. Warren Miller and Mr. Rutledge's other enemies are they will put them aside

at once and choose leaders of the Allan Rutledge stamp."

"I certainly hope so," said the Judge's daughter.

"What have you decided to do about the European trip," continued the Judge, patting the girl's fair cheek. "You are losing some of your blushes. I think an ocean voyage would do you good."

"When did you say the party sails from New York?" asked Mabel.

"They sail on the S. S. Mauretania November 5. If you and I expect to go we must decide at once."

"I think we had better go," said the girl hesitatingly.

"I am glad you have decided, Mabel," said her father, with enthusiasm. "It is a delightful party who are going, and we both need a rest and change. The voyage will remind me of happy days gone forever," continued the Judge, with a far-away look in his eyes. "Your mother and I spent our honeymoon in Europe, but I feel that a trip back to those happy scenes will do me good. It is so lonely here since mother left us," and Judge Grayson's eyes were moist.

"All right, papa," responded his daughter. "I will be ready. It is over two months before sailing time, which gives us plenty of time for our preparations."

This European trip, to which Judge Grayson referred, was a prolonged tour with a party of friends. Mabel Grayson at first had no desire to go, but after receiving Grace Markley's letter, she had changed her mind, and she hoped then an

ocean voyage would rid her heart of its rebellious mood.

Alas for her, no medicine, no travel, no cure has yet been found that can quiet the unrest of a woman's heart when it feels the pain which Mabel Grayson had begun to experience, and which Ann Rutledge had so bitterly known!

When Grace Markley heard of her cousin's plans she was astonished, and was yet more surprised when Mabel refused to visit her in Wellington before starting on her long journey.

"Come and see me," she had written to Mabel, "before you go. I want to talk over my life plans with you. I have always hoped to devote my life entirely to Christian work, but I sometimes think I am taking a step in the dark. I have said nothing yet to my father, though mother knows it."

"I cannot go to see her," said Mabel bitterly, wiping a tear from her eyes as she read this letter. "I could not help showing my own unhappiness. I must conquer this foolish fancy. Oh, I wish our feelings were more directly under our own control!" and the girl gave way to a long outburst of weeping.

"I am sorry," she wrote back to Grace Markley, "that I cannot arrange to go to Wellington. I have two or three other places that I have promised to visit before going East, and our boat sails from New York on November 5th, so you see I have not much time. I expect I shall find you all settled in your new home when I return."

"What can she mean?" said Grace, as she read

this. "'Settled in my new home.' I wonder who has told her everything."

But the result was that Mabel Grayson and Grace Markley did not see each other for a long, long time after this, and during this interval the world changed for each so much that it was like a different place when they met each other again.

It was strange also how Mabel Grayson and Allan Rutledge misunderstood each other. Mabel's answer to Allan's letter, in which he had used the superlative degree of the word preceding her name, was almost cold. She hesitated to send it at first, lest it should discourage him when he was still needing the encouragement of his friends, but finally she mailed it, saying to herself: "I can't write any other kind of letter now, and if he does not answer this, perhaps it is best. For a while, at least, it is impossible for us to be mere friends."

Allan Rutledge saw her in the audience when he was making his great speech at the Convention, of which we will hear later, but she did not come forward to greet him at the close of the meeting that day, although her father, who was with her, did.

Allan had called at Judge Grayson's home the first morning of the Convention, but Mabel had gone out. Judge Grayson invited him to supper the evening after his speech and he was delighted to accept it, but just about six o'clock that day he received a telegram calling him back immediately to Wellington on account of a sudden death in his congregation, and he felt compelled

to take the seven o'clock train for home that evening. He excused himself to Judge Grayson over the telephone.

"He didn't want to come, papa," said Mabel, when her father had brought Allan's excuse to her at the supper table.

"Why, daughter, you are mistaken. He was much pleased when I invited him. I know it was only his stern sense of duty that has sent him back to Wellington, as he wanted to remain until the close of the Convention. I know he was anticipating the pleasure of meeting you again before he left Des Moines. He told me so."

"Did he really?" said the girl, with an unconscious blush.

"There, there, child! Mr. Rutledge's enemies say he hypnotizes the people. I am afraid he has hypnotized my daughter."

Mabel made no reply, busying herself pouring out a cup of tea for her father.

"I am proud of such a man as Allan Rutledge," went on the Judge enthusiastically. "The moral and religious future of the Middle West is assured if men like him become the leaders in the Church."

"I have always admired him," answered Mabel quietly, "since that day when he graduated, when he risked his life to quiet our horses and delivered his address on 'Self-control.'"

"That was a magnificent oration for a graduating address," said her father. "For real eloquence I never heard anything that has surpassed it until I heard Mr. Rutledge this afternoon at the Con-

vention. On his graduation day, you remember, I told you that the young man was a 'friend to man.' He has fulfilled my hopes for him."

Mabel's memory went back, like a flash, to that happy day when she had met Allan Rutledge on the train. That was the day he had arrived in Wellington to begin his eventful ministry. She recalled vividly of telling him what her father had said about him, and how he had replied, with his black eyes shining: "At least, I am a friend to his daughter."

"Yes, he is still my friend," thought Mabel sadly, "but he is only my friend. It is a joy to most people to have such a man as a friend. Alas, it is my cross!"

But outside the inner sanctuary of her own soul no one ever knew Mabel Grayson's disappointment. How little we know of the inner life of even those who are nearest us!

"I am glad Mr. Rutledge won such a splendid victory in the Convention to-day," she said, after a brief pause. Then the conversation changed to a discussion of plans for the European trip.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHURCH CONVENTION HEARS REV. ALLAN RUTLEDGE.

"I am sure we can oust the fellow without any trouble."

"I don't know about that," Brother Miller. I have lost all influence with Markley, and that pious fellow, Stanford, has come to represent the Wellington Church at the Convention." And the last speaker frowned and shook his head.

This conversation took place between two ministers as they walked along the streets of Des Moines. Anyone could tell they were ministers, not from any nobility of character in their appearance, we are sorry to say in this instance, but by their pompous air and clerical dress.

"I will arrange to keep Stanford quiet," said the first speaker, who was Allan's bitter enemy, Dr. Warren Miller. "We have it all arranged that I am to be the president of the Convention this year, and when the reports from the churches are being given I will recognize you when Wellington Church is called on to report. As the president of the college you can report for both the church and the college."

"Good!" replied President Older, for he was the other speaker. "I will be able to take the wind

out of Rutledge's sails. I believe he has been writing around to ministers of the smaller churches. I have found several friends of his among the country pastors."

"Oh, those 'rubes' from the country are an ignorant set!" sneered the Rev. Dr. Warren Miller. "Rutledge belongs among the 'rubes' himself. If any of them try to hinder our plans at this Convention, I will soon show them their place. We can cut down their salaries and teach them to mind their own business."

This threat by Dr. Miller was not an empty one. As the leaders in all departments of the church work, the "machine" controlled the missionary funds from which the meager salaries of the country pastors were supplemented, and it was an easy matter to teach a rebellious preacher by cutting down his missionary allowance. In both Church and State the "machine" principle works similarly. With these ignoble thoughts filling their souls, these two so-called leaders of Christianity in the Middle West passed on.

The annual Convention met in a large central church, which seated an immense audience. The floor space was reserved for the ministers and the lay delegates, while the church people of Des Moines and visitors from different parts of the State were seated in the commodious galleries. The entire church was crowded when the Convention was called to order.

No sooner was this done than the smooth workings of the ecclesiastical "machine" manifested themselves. One of the "machine" puppets

jumped to his feet at once and proposed, in laudatory terms, that Dr. Warren Miller be elected the president of the Convention. The motion was seconded and carried before the majority of the delegates fully understood that the opening prayer was quite finished.

Dr. Miller ascended the platform and assumed control. He made a long introductory speech, apparently impromptu, but in reality carefully prepared, and prepared with a purpose. He spoke vain-gloriously of the "peace and harmony prevailing among the churches within the bounds of our glorious State." Then with simulated reluctance he went on to speak of "one or two unfortunate exceptions to this happy state of affairs." Everyone knew that he referred to Wellington.

The dark eyes of the young Wellington minister gleamed as, in a sneering tone, Dr. Miller continued: "Ill-balanced enthusiasm has brought discord into an important center of influence in our church, but I am sure this Convention will settle that unfortunate affair with a view to our vested interests, which have been imperiled by unwise leadership."

A number of the "machine" gang in the Convention applauded these remarks, but Allan Rutledge smiled to see how mechanical this applause was, and how small the number of those applauding. The great majority listened in severe silence to Dr. Miller's harangue, and many shook their heads in direct disapproval. Allan sat near the back of the church, and none of these signs, by

which an experienced man can read the thoughts of an audience, escaped him.

Although Wellington was the most important church in the State, outside of Des Moines, the leaders of the Convention ignored Allan altogether in making out their program.

Dr. Oudrey, another "machine" man, made a long speech on "Reaching Our Young People," in which he took occasion to speak of "sensational preachers who like to see their names in the papers," and denounced such as driving the young people away from the church. "These unwise hotheads," he exclaimed, "make religion undignified, and young people lose all respect for the ministry when they see such men in charge of our important pulpits. We owe it to ourselves to protect our churches from this kind of demagogery."

Several other addresses were of the same nature, all intended to prepare the mind of the Convention to act promptly and decidedly on Allan Rutledge's case, when President Older would bring in his petition, asking for action by the Convention on the situation at Wellington.

But in spite of its labored program the "machine" was ill at ease. Things were not moving as smoothly as they wished. The Convention listened restlessly to these attacks on Wellington's young minister. During the opening hours of the Convention, Allan had mingled freely with the commoner kind of preachers, the faithful, self-denying home missionaries. He asked them about the success of vital religion in their parishes and encour-

aged them in a way that was new to these humble workers.

The leaders of the "machine" had arranged to snub Allan at the Convention if he appeared in their councils, but he gave them no opportunity, as he always sought the association of the ignored portion of the ministry. The parity of the ministry was not a mere phrase with him; it was a reality.

President Older thought, of course, that this was a part of Allan's deep political scheme to influence the Convention, but he had to admit the superior wisdom shown by the Wellington preacher in thus winning to himself the rural ministers, as, when it came to votes, they were in the majority and really controlled everything.

As the Convention proceeded, a roll-call of all the churches was made, and each church reported briefly. Generally, the pastor reported for the church, although sometimes a lay delegate spoke. When the name of the Wellington Church was called, Dr. Miller, the president of the Convention, said: "I see President Older is here. He can give us the report from Wellington."

As President Older arose, the "machine" gang again tried to stir up applause, but it died out ignominiously. The college president frowned as he noticed the failure of his friends."

"Brethren of the Convention," he began, "we have had a trying year at Wellington. Some new members have been received into the church, most of them very poor people, but to offset this slight advantage our college has been seriously in-

jured, as you all know, through a reckless blunder. Some of our moneyed men in Wellington are talking of withdrawing from the church, and the situation is very perplexing. We need the help of this Convention. I hope that later on action can be taken that will restore the former peace and harmony between the church and college, and bring back again all who are now alienated from the church."

This was a strange report to come from the Wellington Church, which had reported in accessions the largest number received anywhere that year, and which was well known to have had a most remarkable religious awakening.

Amid the tense silence which followed President Older's remarks, Dr. Miller hastily called the name of the next church, so as to shut out any further report from Wellington. But Dr. Miller reckoned without his host.

"Stop!" Shouting this word at the top of his voice, Deacon Stanford was on his feet in an instant. He was seated near the front, and as he turned to face the Convention, everyone could mark his emotion. His face was red. His eyes shone. He was plainly laboring under great excitement. He had listened to the covert attacks on Allan Rutledge until he could endure no longer. As he afterward told his wife, he would have exploded right there if he had kept still another moment. "Stop!" he shouted again. "I object to that report from the Wellington Church. I am an officer in that church, and President Older's remarks are false and misleading."

"Order! order!" cried Dr. Miller.

"I am in order, sir!" cried the indignant deacon. "I am qualified to make a report for the Wellington Church, and I am going to make it." A roar of deafening applause from the Convention showed that Deacon Stanford had at last broken the spell of the "machine."

"I rise to a point of order!" cried President Older, getting on his feet.

"Sit down! sit down! sit down!" came from every part of the building. President Older sat down in confusion, his face distorted with rage. Dr. Miller saw that further opposition was useless, and Deacon Stanford went on. He told of the great work that Allan Rutledge had accomplished. He spoke of the Sabbath services, the Monday evening Bible class, the prayer meetings, the converted drunkards and changed homes. The Convention listened spellbound. It was like a refreshing breeze in a musty room to hear of a truly revived church in the annual Convention. Before he sat down, seeing he had the sympathetic attention of the entire Convention, Deacon Stanford made an appeal on behalf of his minister. With tears in his eyes, and with his voice trembling with emotion, he asked: "Has Mr. Rutledge been treated fairly in this Convention? Is it a crime for a man to preach the Gospel with power in Iowa? Why, then, are these men hounding this minister, whom the whole church in Wellington loves?"

There was a hush as Deacon Stanford sat down. You could have heard a pin fall in the immense

auditorium. Then came cries of "Allan Rutledge! Allan Rutledge!"

Allan arose at the rear of the church to speak.

"Platform! platform!" the enthusiastic delegates cried.

The young hero made his way to the front. As he faced the audience, which represented an important branch of the Christian Church of all Iowa, the deafening applause told him that his brethren had judged his cause and found a verdict in his favor. A tear sprang into his eye at this token of approval, so unsolicited, so cordial, so sincere. He looked over the Convention. It was a truly representative body. The varied nationalities found in the Middle West were all represented. The energy and vigor of a new country were pictured on their faces. These true men had snapped the bonds of the ecclesiastical "machine" as soon as they discovered its real spirit. Allan Rutledge represented them, and thenceforth he became their leader.

President Buchanan was in power in the United States in a critical time in our history, but he did not represent the people. As soon as the people had an opportunity of expressing themselves Buchanan was hurled from office, and Abraham Lincoln stepped into the place of leadership, for he represented the people's common aims and hopes. So in that memorable Church Convention in Des Moines, the church at last found an opportunity of expressing itself, and it hurled to the ground men like Dr. Warren Miller and President Older,

and Allan Rutledge and kindred spirits assumed control.

Allan began his speech quietly and slowly. He did not boast, but with great earnestness he told of the power of God's Word in Wellington, and of the complete transformation which a genuine religious awakening had accomplished. Away back in the gallery he caught sight of Mabel Grayson, listening intently to his story, and the knowledge of her presence gave him a sense of exaltation. He grew more and more eloquent. The Convention listened in wonder at his power.

"When I went to Wellington," the speaker concluded "my prayer was:

'Wherever wrongs the right deny,
Or suffering spirits urge their plea,
Make me a voice to smite the lie,
A hand to set the prisoner free.'

I have shirked no known duty in the performance of my ministry, though I freely confess I have made many mistakes. But God has blessed my feeble efforts to help my fellow-men. I stand here to-day and record to him my gratitude. No matter what disposition this Convention may make of the petition of my enemies that I be removed from Wellington, I shall go on in my life in future as I have in the past, with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives me to see the right.' Brethren, I seek not honor from men.

'I live for those who love me,
For those who hold me true,
For the heaven that smiles above me
And waits my coming too:
For the wrongs that needs resistance,
For the good that needs assistance,
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I may do.'"

When the speaker sat down the whole Convention rose as one man, and a faithful, old home missionary, Captain Bryan, led in prayer. In his younger days this man had been a sea captain, and in his fervent prayer that day he made many references to the sea, the rocks, the storms and the ships that battle with the waves. He implored the great Pilot of the Gospel ship to guide the Church in that wondrous Western land, and raise up more men like Allan Rutledge, who would boldly launch the lifeboat and save those who were sinking in the dark waters of sin.

When Captain Bryan had finished his prayer the incident closed, and the rest of the reports were called for. But it was a convention now with a new spirit. The old leaders held their offices nominally a little longer, but the "machine" itself knew that its days were numbered. At the close of the session of the Convention that afternoon an informal reception was given to Wellington's victorious minister, and expressions of good-will were showered upon him. Among those who greeted him was Judge Grayson.

"I am Mabel's father," he said. "I congratulate

you on your speech to-day. It has changed the course of history in Iowa. I have only heard one better speech in my life, and that was your graduating address at our college. Do you remember it?"

Allan remembered it all only too well. He missed the Judge's daughter, who had, on the former occasion, come forward to speak to him, but who was nowhere to be seen at this time.

"Come to supper with us to-night," said the Judge. "Mabel will be delighted to see you, I know."

Allan gladly consented. However, a short time later a telegram was handed him from Wellington. It was a call for him to return home at once, as one of his congregation had been suddenly stricken and his presence was required the next day. After excusing himself over the telephone to the kind Judge, he took the night train for Wellington.

In spite of Allan's evident victory in the Convention his enemies still had a little hope. They could not believe that their whole power had gone from them so swiftly and so completely. They waited until almost the end of the Convention, and, at the last moment, when the majority of the delegates had departed for their homes, President Older presented his petition asking the Convention to investigate the trouble at Wellington and recommend further action at a later time. This petition was made with the hope that by continually harassing Allan he would weary of the struggle and retire of his own accord. But President Older had failed to notice that the faithful Deacon

Stanford was still at the Convention. He had feared such a trick and was on hand to expose it. As soon as President Older sat down the Deacon again jumped to his feet. He threw away all reserve and carried the war into the enemy's quarter, attacking vigorously the present administration of Wellington College.

"Who denies that there was gambling there?" he cried. "Is it a crime to expose such deviltry just because it happens in a Christian college?"

He then went on to say that the church was unanimous in its support of Mr. Rutledge, and that he had given the church new life.

"It is the college alone that needs to be investigated," said Deacon Stanford, in conclusion, "and I move that a committee of this Convention be appointed to investigate the real condition of things in Wellington College, said committee to lay the results of their investigations before the Board of Trustees of the college."

To the intense disgust and humiliation of President Older this resolution carried, and a committee was named, which was composed of men of courage and integrity.

Deacon Stanford was jubilant when he returned home, and in talking over events with Allan he exclaimed: "We have not seen the end yet. President Older has another big slice of 'humble pie' to eat before he is done!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TRUSTEES OF WELLINGTON COLLEGE HAVE A HOUSECLEANING.

There is an interesting story in an ancient writing about a man named Haman, who became offended at one of his fellow-citizens, a certain Mordecai, a rather good sort of man. Haman became more and more bitter in his enmity, and finally plotted Mordecai's death. Building a gallows fifty cubits high, he designed to ask as a favor from the king of that country to be given the pleasure of suspending his enemy, Mordecai, from the lofty gallows. As he was a high favorite with the king, he did not anticipate any trouble in obtaining this favor, but a sudden turn in the wheel of fortune brought Mordecai under the king's smile, while Haman fell into disgrace. The result was that the king hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai.

As President Older returned to Wellington after the annual Convention, he felt much the same as Haman must have felt when he found himself about to be suspended from his own gallows. The college president had prepared a pit for the Rev. Allan Rutledge, but he had fallen into his own pit. Allan Rutledge was the hero of the hour, while President Older realized that he had

lost his power in the Convention, and he began to fear for his own future.

The Convention committee was to meet in a few weeks to investigate the college. The results of this investigation were dreaded by the president, who had been more occupied in church politics than in the proper administration of Wellington's educational institution. So much did President Older dread an investigation, that he finally paid a visit to the Wellington minister, and began to beg for Allan's help.

Allan was surprised to see the former haughty churchman so humiliated, and he really felt sorry for him, but it was now too late for the college authorities to make advances to the minister.

"The committee of the Convention must come and make its investigations," said Allan.

"We must arrange to have that committee dismissed," answered President Older anxiously. "They will only revive the scandal and hurt our college just as we are beginning the fall term."

"I can do nothing, sir," replied Allan gravely. "It is too late. I offered you peace on the Chautauqua grounds, but you chose war."

The investigating committee met in Wellington a few weeks later and made a thorough investigation of the college. Students were questioned, professors were examined, even President Older was compelled to answer a number of pointed questions. The results of the investigation were not made public, but the committee laid them before a full meeting of the board of trustees of the college, which met shortly after this.

This was the first full meeting of the board of trustees that had been held in several years. A few of the trustees had previously attended entirely to the business connected with the institution. The result of the widespread sensation in regard to gambling in the college had awakened the other trustees to their duty. They came in full force to this meeting, fully determined to have a thorough housecleaning.

President Older and the few trustees who had formerly held control made a desperate effort to whitewash the college and to throw the blame for all the trouble on Allan Rutledge. But this was futile. The majority of the trustees had heard Allan in Des Moines, when he made his great speech before the Convention, and they were now on his side. In addition, the Convention committee presented the results of its investigation, and it disclosed an alarming state of affairs. It was proved that the social habits of the college had become exceedingly loose. It was shown that a regular gambling class had been holding meetings in the college for a long time previous to its exposure and disorganization through Allan Rutledge's newspaper attack. The dances which Frederick Markley had organized every month at the college were also scathingly denounced as a factor in the growing spirit of irreligion and careless morals in the institution. The committee's report recommended that the college administration be entirely reorganized, and stating that such a change would be necessary or the annual Convention would be requested to designate Wellington

College as an undesirable institution from a Christian standpoint.

This report stirred the trustees to immediate action. Professor Gilman was summarily dismissed, as unqualified to be an instructor in a Christian college. President Older and three other professors were requested to resign. In vain Dr. Warren Miller, one of the trustees, pleaded for his old associate. In vain some of the local trustees, who had no connection with the Wellington Church and who disliked Allan Rutledge's aggressive Christianity, tried to whitewash the situation, and to retain President Older. The trustees were determined to reshape the entire policy of the college.

President Older resigned, and a new president, Professor Richard Shephard, was elected, a well known friend of Allan's, who had spent a year abroad when the Wellington minister was studying also in Europe. Rev. Allan Rutledge was also elected to the board of trustees, in place of Dr. Warren Miller, who resigned. The breach between the church and college in Wellington was fully healed, and new prosperity came to the renovated educational center.

It was characteristic of Allan Rutledge, that while these exciting scenes were being enacted at the meeting of the board of trustees of the college, he himself should be engaged in the humble, though Christlike work, of visiting among the lowly.

While he was calling at the home of the widowed and childless German woman, whose daugh-

ter had died in Allan's presence some time before, he met Grace Markley, and they walked home together.

"Where is your brother, Frederick?" asked the minister, who had not seen Miss Markley, to speak to, for some little time.

"He is down in Texas on a trip," she answered with a sad voice. "Fred is in poor health, and something is troubling him dreadfully."

"I believe your brother is getting ready to change his life," said Allan hopefully, and he related to her his interview with Frederick at the railroad "bend."

"I certainly hope and pray that he may soon be aroused to see how he is wasting his life," replied the sister. "I have prayed, oh, so earnestly for Frederick. He used to be a good boy. It was such companions as Jamison White and some of the wilder students at the college who led him astray. I often have wished that you had come to Wellington a few years earlier. It would have meant Frederick's salvation."

"I think God is about to answer your prayers for your brother," said the minister encouragingly. "I am always hopeful for the erring when they realize their condition, and I think your brother now sees he has been living in folly. I am going to have a good talk with him when he returns."

"He will be home in a month or so. I do not think he is being benefited any in Texas. It is not a change of climate he needs; it is a change of heart."

"I am glad to see your father attending church

again," said Allan a little later. "Deacon Stanford tells me that he is not so bitter as he was against the present minister in Wellington."

"Poor papa!" responded the girl, "something is troubling him, too. We have been very unhappy recently at our home. I wish you could call on papa in his office. He seems to have lost interest in everything. He did not even attend the meeting of the college trustees to-day. He told us at dinner, however, that the trustees are determined to remove President Older."

"I am sorry for President Older," said Allan, "but he is reaping what he has sown. That law of the harvest is an unchangeable law of our universe, and it is a terrible law. I often shudder when I think of it. Men would be more careful in their lives if they did not forget this unalterable and universal law."

"I know it," said the girl quietly. "In my own brief experience I have seen that law at work. But Mr. Rutledge," she went on earnestly, "you must call on papa as soon as you can. I believe you can help him. He is almost as miserable as Fred. I think he and Fred have quarreled, although papa has not said anything about it to us."

"I will surely see him," responded the minister.

"Before I forget it," said the girl again, "I want to congratulate you on your speech at the Convention in Des Moines. The papers have been full of it, and Mabel Grayson has written me that Judge Grayson said it was the best speech he ever heard. She told me I ought to be proud of you."

"What is the matter with your cousin?" Allan

responded quickly, ignoring her compliment in his haste.

"What makes you ask such a question as that?" asked Grace Markley, in surprise.

"She avoided me when I was in Des Moines, and she writes such short, cold, formal letters, so different from what she used to write. After my speech her father came up and spoke to me and invited me to supper at their home, but Mabel did not come near, although she was sitting beside her father in the gallery. I did not see her at all when I was in Des Moines. She was out when I called, and I was not able to go to supper when the Judge invited me, as it was that evening I received a telegram calling me back to Wellington. I wonder if I have offended her in any way," Allan added in a plaintive voice.

"I really don't understand Mabel myself lately," said Grace. "She wrote me some time ago that she thought she would not take the European trip, and then she hastily changed her mind, and she and her father go with a party to Europe. They sail November 5th from New York. She has refused to visit Wellington before she starts, and I sometimes think her letters to me are not as cordial as formerly."

"I must arrange to see her before she leaves Des Moines," said the minister. "When I was speaking at the Convention I noticed her in the audience and I was reminded of the first day I ever saw her. It was on my graduation day at college. All through my graduating oration I could feel the influence of her presence and sym-

pathy. It was just the same at the Convention. I saw her in the gallery, sitting beside her father, and I felt inspired."

"You are winning on every side, Mr. Rutledge," said the girl, wishing to change the conversation. "I should think you would be a happy man, since you have received the approbation of your fellow-ministers in such a marked way. Your enemies have been silenced and confounded."

"I ought to be happy," he answered sadly, "but I am not. I am grieved about Miss Grayson. What does the applause of all Iowa signify if she frowns on me?"

Grace Markley had come to the conclusion that Mabel Grayson did not in any way return Allan's affection, of which she had known for some time, and she was desirous of turning his thoughts away from Mabel, and she felt that only disappointment would result from his suit. She determined, with a wisdom beyond her years, to arouse him to other ambitions.

"For shame, Mr. Rutledge!" she exclaimed. "Are all the rest of us of no account? Your duty in life is not to win the affection of Mabel Grayson or any other person. Your duty is a higher and nobler mission. It is yours to lead in the grand work of Americanizing and Christianizing this varied population of our wonderful Middle West. God has called you to a place of vast influence and power. Do not betray your cause, as Samson did, seeking your own personal pleasure."

The energy with which the girl spoke, the ring of sincerity in her voice, the lofty vision of his life-

work which she described, caused Allan to stand still and gaze at her in astonishment.

"You know I am speaking the truth," the girl continued. "Providence has clearly indicated that you are to be one of God's chosen instruments in laying deep and true the foundations of Christ's kingdom in this favored Mississippi valley. Lift up your eyes unto the hills, Mr. Rutledge. Am I not telling you God's plan for your life?"

Allan heard and understood. Her vision of his mission became his own, and he was thrilled at the sight. But his heart—ah, his heart was human! The Irish poet, Moore, has sung:

"The heart, like the tendril, accustomed to cling,
Let it grow where it will, cannot flourish alone."

"Must I cease to think of her?" he asked himself, and his heart answered, "You cannot, you cannot!"

But a higher voice spoke within his soul. "You can do your duty," this voice said, "even if your heart is uncheered by the affection for which it hungers." Allan Rutledge girded up the loins of his soul.

"You are right," he said slowly and emphatically, to Grace Markley, as he bade her farewell. "I will be true to my mission first of all. I thank you for reminding me that first things must always be put first."

And with a firm resolve, but bleeding heart, he walked on rapidly through the streets of Wellington.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HUSKING CONTEST.

It was a perfect autumn morning, one day late in October, when Allan started for another visit to his father's home on the Des Moines River.

"I must get away from Wellington," he said to himself. "I can fight out this battle in my heart better on the old farm."

Allan seemed born to struggle. His enemies in the church and college had been utterly routed. He was victorious on every side over his external foes. But an internal enemy had now attacked him. He was struggling desperately with the disappointment he felt in seeing Mabel Grayson slip out of his life. She had come to figure so largely in all of his plans for the future that life without her seemed a blank. Yet, as Grace Markley had shown him, his first duty was to his life mission. He acknowledged this, but, to his dismay, he found himself losing all interest, apparently, in his work, and he was unable to keep his thoughts from dwelling constantly on the beautiful daughter of Judge Grayson.

"She is not for me," he said to himself sadly, on that autumn day, as he started away from Wellington. "I must crush this rebellious heart of mine. The old farm will revive my soul."

He arrived at the small town near his father's farm late in the afternoon, and at once started to walk into the country. It was the fall season, and the golden ears of corn were hanging ripe on the tall stalks ready to be gathered by the hand of the farmer. The corn crop is gathered leisurely by the Iowa farmers during the weeks that follow the latter part of October.

As Allan walked briskly along the familiar road by the side of the Des Moines River, he met several farmers with their wagons loaded full with the golden cereal, the first-fruits of a "bumper" crop. Naturally, his thoughts reverted to his walk along the same road a few months before. How changed all was since then! Not only was the entire appearance of nature changed, but his own circumstances were altogether altered. Then he was a minister under fire and in danger of complete defeat. Now he was the victorious leader of his church not only in Wellington, but in all Iowa.

Deep gratitude for his victory welled up in his soul. The fruitful fields around him recalled to his mind the devout words of an ancient Eastern poet: "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."

"These words describe God's goodness to my own beloved Iowa," said Allan to himself.

Then the river recalled to his mind the happy days at the "camp" with Mabel Grayson and her

friends, and a gloom came into his soul. The darkness was deepening around him and he began to repeat slowly to himself the pathetic words of Gray's "Elegy":

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward wends his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me."

"Yes," he went on, thinking aloud, "I am left alone with my darkness. Mabel desires to be my friend, but I can plainly see my suit displeases her. She honors me as a minister of Christ and respects me as a man, but, alas! she can never understand how desolate she has left my heart."

With such sad thoughts in his mind, Allan arrived at the old farm and entered his father's gate. His welcome home was so cordial and hearty that his spirits rose at once.

"Hail to the Chief!" sang out his sister, Edith.

"I am proud of you, my boy," said his father. "All the newspapers have been ringing with your praises since your great speech at the Convention at Des Moines."

His mother said nothing, simply throwing her arms around his neck and giving him a sincere kiss of welcome and affection. Allan was happy, for there is no praise like that of the home folks.

"Here is a letter that will surprise you," said his mother, a little later. "We were so glad to get it yesterday. You have come home just in time."

Allan's eyes opened wide in astonishment, as he

read the following letter which his mother had handed to him:

"Des Moines, Iowa," October 25, 190—.

"My Dear Mrs. Rutledge: I am expecting to start on a trip to Europe in a few days, but I have not forgotten my promise to visit you in corn-gathering time. I shall be down on Wednesday of this week to spend a day with you, arriving on the early morning train. I expect some of you can meet me at the station. I shall be glad to see you all again, and I am bringing you a book which I know you will enjoy. Your loving friend,

"Mabel Grayson."

Allan at first was too amazed to speak. Then a thrill of joy possessed him. At least he would see her again!

"You can drive over to the station for her to-morrow morning," said his mother to Allan. "You got here just in time to be useful."

"I surely will!" he responded, so eagerly that his mother exclaimed: "Ah, you knew she was coming and you have come up to see her, not us!"

"Not at all, not at all!" he answered. "I have not heard from Miss Grayson for some time. I had no idea whatever of meeting her here."

"Still, you are glad she is coming," interjected his sister, Edith. "I can tell it from your eyes."

"Bravo!" cried Paul, a younger brother of Allan's. "To-morrow is to be a great day, all right. Our husking contest comes off to-morrow. It will be grand to have visitors from Wellington and Des Moines."

"What husking contest?" asked Allan.

"Roger Manning and I," said Paul Rutledge, "are to decide who is the best husker to-morrow. He has been bragging about what he can do, and I challenged him to a contest. I have been training for it for over a week."

"I shall certainly enjoy an old-fashioned husking contest," said Allan. "It will remind me of old times, when I used to gather corn myself."

Allan had difficulty in sleeping that night. The long, long memories of boyhood thronged through his mind, the excitement of his homecoming, the anticipated meeting with Mabel Grayson and the drive alone with her from the station, all combined to drive away sleep, and fill his soul with thrilling emotions.

It was long after midnight when sleep finally came and his joys and sorrows, triumphs and defeats, were all forgotten in slumber. How wonderful is sleep! Waving its mystic wand over wearied humanity, it breathes fresh life into the unconscious souls of men.

The sun was up, and the entire household was astir when Allan's profound slumbers were disturbed by loud knocking at his door.

"Get up, Allan!" his brother, Paul, was saying. "It is nearly time to start for the station."

Allan bestirred himself quickly, and dressing hastily, hurried down to breakfast. After the meal he accompanied his father to the barn to assist in hitching up the driving team.

Harnessed to a new buggy, the prancing horses made a pretty picture, and Allan's father and mother watched him drive out to the road, with

the easy mastery of an experienced driver, their hearts went out to the strong, capable, preacher-son.

"He is a good boy," said the father, as the buggy disappeared swiftly down the road.

"I always knew my Allan would do a great work in the world," responded the mother, with a tear of happiness in her eye. "He has Abraham Lincoln's purity of soul and the courage of a Martin Luther. I well knew he would win a victory in Wellington."

Shortly after Allan reached the station, the morning train from Des Moines rolled in. The conductor and brakeman jumped off and a few passengers began to alight. With a bound of joy in his heart, Allan saw Mabel Grayson step down on the platform. She looked around inquiringly and their eyes met.

"You Allan!" she exclaimed, so enthusiastically that he thought his ears had deceived him. He was about to reply eagerly, "Yes, Mabel, are you glad to see me?" when she quickly recovered herself and added, "Mr. Rutledge, I mean."

She spoke in a strained voice and Allan at once thought she had read his eyes, and that she had purposely repelled him coldly.

"I will not torment her with my attentions," he thought to himself. "She is mother's guest. I will say nothing to her to-day."

Mabel Grayson noticed his constraint and imagined it resulted from his desire to be friendly, but not too friendly.

"He shall not know my heart," she said within herself.

Thus it was that owing to misunderstandings on both sides these two natures, mutually so attracted to each other, kept wide apart during the entire drive from the station to the Rutledge farm.

Scientists tell us that oxygen and hydrogen, though capable of uniting their elements in the lovely unity of the sparkling dewdrop, yet can remain side by side indefinitely, as separate elements, unless an electric spark flashes through them. So that morning these two congenial natures kept apart from each other. Had the electric spark—"I love you"—only flashed from Allan's lips, their two hearts would have flowed together like water, but Mabel gave no outward encouragement, and Allan fiercely quenched the spark that almost emitted itself in spite of him.

Still it was a drive long remembered by both. The road wound along the river, shaded by trees, for the most part, and made romantic looking by the glades, richly wooded, along the banks.

"Do you remember the night you sang, 'Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon' at the 'camp' last summer?" Allan asked, when the road skirted so near the river that they could hear its gentle swish against the banks.

"I certainly do!" answered Mabel. "We enjoyed ourselves that night."

"I wish it could have lasted forever," said Allan pathetically.

Mabel did not understand his meaning and she

was silent. He took it as a fresh rebuff and began to speak to her about her trip to Europe.

"You ought to visit Scotland and see the places which Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott have immortalized by their genius," he began.

"We intend to visit the British Isles on our way home," she answered.

"What is your itinerary for your trip?" asked Allan, glad to find a congenial topic of conversation.

The girl was also glad to go into details. She described fully their plans. They expected to go direct from New York to Egypt, passing down the Nile as far as Asyut.

"I have a dear friend who is a medical missionary in Asyut," said Mabel. "She is the head nurse in the operating department of the American hospital there."

The journey from Egypt to Palestine was to be made overland, following the footsteps of Moses and the children of Israel. After a tour through the Holy Land, they planned to visit the famous countries of Europe, finishing the trip by an extended visit to England, Scotland and Ireland.

"How delightful a program!" said Allan enthusiastically. "How I wish I could accompany your party!" He then began to speak of some of the interesting European places which he himself had visited.

All at once Mabel cried out: "Here we are at your home, and yonder is your father and mother awaiting us. What a short drive it was!"

Mrs. Rutledge welcomed Miss Grayson heartily,

exclaiming: "How fortunate that Allan came up! You both seem to have enjoyed your drive."

"I certainly did not expect to meet your son," said Mabel, with a blush; "but I thought I could not start for Europe without seeing you again. Here is a book I brought you," she added, taking a handsomely bound book out of her handbag and handing it to Allan's mother.

It was a copy of "The Story of Ann Rutledge," an edition de luxe of which had just been issued.

"Thank you; thank you, very much," said Mrs. Rutledge, as she looked at the volume. "I have heard of this book and I am so glad to get it. I knew the world would some day appreciate the story of Ann Rutledge."

"It is a most interesting book, and it is being very widely read," answered Mabel. "Ann Rutledge seems a relative of mine now."

"Would that she might be!" said Allan, who was standing close by and who noticed the tenderness in Mabel's voice when she referred to the woman who won Abraham Lincoln's love, but he repeated these words within his own heart. Nothing but a sigh escaped his lips.

When they gathered for dinner, Allan found his brothers were greatly excited over the husking contest which had begun that morning. The two contestants had gathered about an equal number of bushels during the morning, but Paul Rutledge was confident of victory.

"I am still as fresh as a daisy," he said, as he arose from the table and took a brief rest. Thirty minutes was allowed for dinner.

"We will be out in the field this afternoon to watch the close of the contest," said Allan, as Paul went out. "I wish you success."

The work of husking corn, rapidly, requires skill and endurance. The husker rips open the shucks which protect the growing corn with one hand, grasping the ear of corn with the other, and deftly breaks it off the stem, leaving the shucks hanging empty on the stalk. Every ear of corn in all the millions upon millions of bushels grown in the Middle West is gathered in this way, ear by ear, every fall. It is an enormous task, as it is a large day's work for the average husker to gather eighty bushels in one day.

The monotony of corn gathering is varied occasionally by some such contest as was going on that day on the Rutledge farm. At these contests the amount of corn gathered by one man is often remarkable. On this occasion, the two contestants, Paul Rutledge and Roger Manning, a neighboring farmer's son, were gathering in the same field, but they had begun at opposite sides, so as not to interfere with one another. As the afternoon wore on the spectators increased, until they were lining the field. As is always the case, both of the rivals had their friends, and there was much speculation as to the winner. Mabel Grayson had never seen such a contest before and she was greatly interested.

Both of the huskers were attended by two wagons, which were kept busy hauling away the corn. An accurate account of the number of bushels gathered by each was kept and a report was

made at regular intervals, as in games like baseball. Both of the young men were breaking off the corn with remarkable quickness. They were a well matched pair, and the outcome, in spite of Paul's confidence, was doubtful. Within an hour of quitting time the race was still neck to neck. The rivals increased their speed.

"Just half an hour to quitting time!" shouted the judge of the contest.

The young men were now working like demons. They were clad only in shirt and overalls. The corn was rattling into the wagons like hail on a roof. The gloves, which all huskers wear to protect their hands, were being changed again and again, as they soon tore them to tatters. The judge mounted a wagon to make another announcement.

"There are fifteen minutes' time left!' he cried. "Both have exactly 125 bushels.

This was a record-breaking score, and showed that the two rivals were the choice corn huskers of the neighborhood. Paul Rutledge had some of his elder brother's determination, and he threw himself on the cornstalks with a fury that resembled that of Richard Coeur de Lion hurling himself against the hosts of the Saladin. His arms flew faster and faster. He was making a final spurt, determined to win the goal or die in the attempt.

"Look at Paul!" said Mabel to Allan. "How can he do it?"

Anyone could see he was using every ounce of energy in his body. His breath was coming in

short gasps. His face was red, streaming with perspiration. His hair was disheveled, his shirt wet through with sweat. Friends held a dipper of water in front of him occasionally and he lapped out of it, without ceasing a moment in his strenuous battle with the ears of corn.

But Roger Manning was also determined. It was a battle royal. Greek had met Greek. As in former days, when knights of equal valor met in the tournament and were at last compelled to finish with honors even, so it seemed that the husking contest was to end in a draw. The crowd closed in around the boys and cheered them on. They were struggling now almost side by side.

"Five minutes more!" shouted the judge, holding his watch in his hand.

The excitement was intense. Not a sound was heard except the "snap" of ears of corn, as they broke off from the stalk, and their rattle as they fell into the wagons, thrown there wildly by the now desperate contestants.

The veins stood out on Paul's temples like whipcords. His eyes blazed with fire and determination. Allan was close beside him, whispering encouragement.

"Steady, Paul; keep up that swing and victory is yours. Steady," he whispered again, as Paul almost missed an ear in his mad onward rush from stalk to stalk.

Faster and still faster flew his hands. One was reminded of Robert Burns' description of the midnight dancers in Alloway Kirk, when the astonished Tom o' Shanter

"glower'd amazed and curious,
And mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew:
The dancers quick and quicker flew:
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin sweat and reekit."

Such was the scene as Paul Rutledge and Roger Manning finished their long remembered husking contest, amid the crowd of neighbors, mute with astonishment.

"Time!" yelled the judge, and Paul stopped with a strong effort. He would have fallen to the ground had not Allan's strong arm grasped him.

"You have won!" said Allan in his ear. "You made a full five bushels in that last fifteen minutes. It was grand!"

In a few minutes the judge announced the result of the contest: "Paul Rutledge, 130 bushels; Roger Manning, 128 bushels."

Cheers rent the air, even Mannings' friends joining in the applause and congratulations to the plucky winner. Paul's chums shouldered him and bore him in triumph out of the cornfield with as much enthusiasm as greeted the winner of the far-famed Marathon races on the Corinthian isthmus.

The next morning Mabel Grayson left for her home in Des Moines. Allan drove her to the station in the family carriage, his father and mother accompanying them. To the very last Allan felt that Mabel treated him with a distant reserve.

As the train bearing her away from him, perhaps forever, pulled out of the station, his hungry

heart said: "Ah, if she only knew, she would have given me, at least, one last word!"

How little we know oftentimes about the inward thoughts of others! At that very moment on the train Mabel Grayson's fair head leaned heavily on her hand. Tears were trickling from her eyes. Oh, Allan, Allan!" she moaned to herself, "I fear I can never forget you, but neither Grace nor you shall ever know."

And their misunderstanding all came about through Frederick Markley's light remarks about the Wellington minister the day he called on Mabel Grayson at her father's home. This had prepared her mind to accept the conclusion that he was engaged to Grace Markley, a conclusion which a letter from that lady herself had unwittingly served to confirm.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FRANK ANTOL'S FATEFUL DISCOVERY.

Allan Rutledge returned from his father's farm in a discouraged mood. His unexpected meeting with Mabel Grayson made him more wretched than before. He had fresh proof in this meeting that, though she regarded him as a friend, any attempt on his part to win a nearer claim would be studiously repelled by her. He was in his study one Friday morning, preparing his message for the coming Sabbath morning. He was studying a theme that always heretofore had warmed his heart, for he had chosen as his text, "The kingdom of God is amongst you"; but he could not concentrate his mind on his task. He found his thoughts wandering to the Des Moines River. He could see the camp fire blazing and hear Mabel Grayson again, singing with all the pathos in her soul the song of Burns:

> "How can ye chant, ye little birds,
> And I sae weary, fu' o' care."

His day dream was rudely interrupted. Without any preliminary warning, without a knock, the door of his study was flung open and Frank Antol

bounded in with the air of a man fleeing for his life. His hat was gone. His eyes were staring. He was breathless and unable to speak, as he stopped in front of Allan and pushed a postal-card and a worn piece of paper into the hands of the startled minister.

"What's the matter, Frank?" exclaimed Allan, taking the papers out of his trembling hand and rising to his feet.

"Read! read!" gasped the youth.

"Sit down! sit down!" responded the minister, recovering his own self-control and assisting the exhausted boy to a chair. He sat watching Allan with glaring eyes as the minister began to read the postal card. At a glance Allan understood. He saw at once that the writing on the postal-card was the same peculiar handwriting that was on the note Frank's sister had received on the day of her tragic death. The other paper which Frank Antol handed him, was this very note, so that there could be no mistake. It was a peculiar kind of feigned writing, and the same hand had written both note and postal-card. The secret was revealed. The time had come for the vindication of Viola Antol's honor, and for vengeance on her destroyer. The harvest of sin had come, bringing with it an awful damnation. Utterly ignorant as yet of the whole truth, but assured that another tragedy was about to blacken the Wellington sky, Allan Rutledge groaned and covered his face with his hands. The boy regained his composure somewhat and began his story.

"It was just a few minutes ago I found out," he

gasped, and Allan could see that even his teeth chattered in his agitation. "I was in the office alone and Frederick Markley came in. He just returned from the South yesterday. He asked for a postal-card and I handed it to him. He wrote on the card and handed it back to me to put in the mail box. I glanced at the writing, by accident, and I almost fainted. It was identically the same as that on Viola's note. To make sure there was no mistake I took out the note, which I always have carried with me, and then I realized that Frederick Markley was my sister's murderer. I lost all self-control as the truth dawned on me. I gave a wild cry and rushed from the office, coming directly to you. Only one thing saved his life. I remembered he was Grace Markley's brother. What shall I do sir? Oh, what shall I do?"

Allan examined the postal-card again. It was a note to a boon companion of young Markley's at Des Moines, and was signed "Fred." The handwriting was disguised exactly the same as that on Viola's note. There was no mistake possible. Frederick Markley was Viola's murderer!

"He cannot live! he cannot live!" cried Viola's brother, and in Allan's ears the words sounded as the cry of Vengeance.

"Frank," said the minister, after a pause, "leave this all with me. Go home and pray. You are not God's minister of vengeance. Any wrong act by you now would only rob your father and mother of their son, who is their sole remaining comfort and hope. I must think myself before I decide what my duty is. Trust me, my boy."

As he spoke these last words Allan put out his hand in sympathy. Frank Antol arose and grasped it, and bowing his head on their clasped hands, he gave way to an outburst of weeping so violent that the minister had to support him or he would have fallen to the floor.

"My God! O my God, help me!" groaned the youth as he sank back again into his chair.

The minister understood the awful struggle going on in the heart of the youth. The young Bohemian's wild nature, handed down to him from his ancestors, was unchained and clamoring for vengeance, but his Christian conscience was waking up his better self, and the fearful battle in his soul between passion and conscience was terrible to witness.

In silent sympathy, Allan stood by his side, his arm around his neck, his eyes wet with tears. Not a word was spoken for fully ten minutes. Ah, into ten minutes sometimes is crowded the experience of years! Calmed, strengthened, assured by the strong, righteous, trusted man who stood beside him, Frank Antol's nobler life won the day. The lion within him which roared for its prey was chained again.

"I will go home," at length he said, speaking very slowly, "and tell my mother all. She will help me." And then he added: "Poor Miss Grace! Think of her!"

Without another word he left, and Allan Rutledge was alone with one of the most soul-distressing problems that mortal man ever faced. He laid the two damning documents on his desk—the

postal-card signed "Fred," which Frank Antol had seen Frederick Markley write, and the note which Frank had found in Viola's room.

What was he to do? "Poor Miss Grace! Think of her!" The youth's last words rang in his ears. He was thinking of her, of the awful disgrace that would be hers when her brother was arrested for murder, of her agony of soul over her brother's crime.

Then began his own struggle. A verse from the Book which guided his life flashed through his mind: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

"Why need you do anything about this whole matter," whispered an insinuating voice in his soul. "God is the just Judge. Keep all quiet. Hush the matter up. Remember Grace Markley, your church and the community. Do not stir up scandal. Love covers sin."

"Get thee behind me, Satan," said the Wellington minister, the successor of Doctor Anning, rising and looking around as though seeking to find his adversary and hurl him from his presence. As he thought of those dread moments afterward, Allan Rutledge recalled to his mind the incident in Martin Luther's life which Carlyle describes so graphically: "In the room of the Wartburg, where he sat translating the Bible, they still show you a black spot on the wall—the strange memorial of one of Luther's conflicts. Luther sat translating one of the Psalms; he was worn down with long labor and abstinence from food; there rose before him some hideous, indefinable image, which he took

for the Evil One, to forbid his work. Luther started up, with fiend defiance, flung his inkstand at the specter, and it disappeared. The spot still remains there, a curious monument of several things." The black spot testifies to the white soul of the German reformer, who refused, even in thought, to compromise with evil.

When Allan Rutledge had thus defied the insinuating voice within him, a nobler word came to his perplexed mind. Longfellow's couplet was remembered:

"Leave unto the Lord the rest.
Do thy duty, that is best:"

As the minister continued in deep thought, still another voice spoke. He bowed his head in reverence and he seemed to hear the great War President himself speak in his ear these words: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives me to see the right."

Allan Rutledge had determined on his course of conduct. "I shall see Frederick Markley himself," he decided. "The laws of our land must be honored. The unfortunate man must answer for his crime to God's ministers of justice on earth."

When he had finally made up his mind, Allan felt a wonderful relief. His pathway was still rough enough, but he could see plainly the path in which he must walk. A secret source of strength seemed to impart energy to his life the moment he decided to do the right, regardless of cost or conse-

quence. Shortly after dinner he called up the Markley home on the telephone. Grace answered the call.

"Can I speak to Frederick?" asked Allan.

"Certainly," she replied. "He came home yesterday. Here he is."

"Can you meet me at the officers' room in the church at two o'clock to-day?" asked the minister of Frederick Markley. "I have a matter of great importance to talk over with you."

Frank Antol's conduct at the office in the morning had created a panic in young Markley's soul. He had a presentiment that the coils were tightening around him.

"All right," he answered, and Allan noticed distinctly the tremble in his voice.

At two o'clock the two men met in the officers' room at the church. It was a pathetic scene. Broken in health, hounded by his evil genius, Jamison White, tortured by an aroused conscience and now confronted with his awful crime against Viola Antol, Frederick Markley quailed in terror before Allan Rutledge, as the minister of the Wellington Church asked the former choir leader for a full confession.

"I will tell you all, sir!" he exclaimed; "but save me! oh, save me!"

"Tell me your story," said Allan gravely.

And the wretched man told it all. He told of his sin against the Frisbie home and of his relations with Jamison White. He related, in full, the tragedy of Viola Antol's betrayal and death. As Allan listened to the man's story of his moral mad-

ness, its recital called forth a response from every emotion in the gamut of his soul. He was stirred with pity for the wrecked life before him. He boiled with indignation at Viola's wrongs. His heart bled in sympathy with the members of the two homes which this man's sin had desolated. After all, the story was not an unusual one. Tiring of Mrs. Frisbie, Frederick Markley had been attracted by the rare beauty of Viola Antol. He began paying her attentions and seeking to win her regard. Although the difference in their social station was so great, they met on equal terms at the church, and especially at choir practices. This sin-blinded son of wealthy American parents deliberately sought the ruin of the pure, simple-minded, sincere, Christian foreigner. He won Viola's confidence. He asked her hand in marriage, leading her on step by step, desiring first a secret wedding, that his parents might not interfere. At a mock wedding, in which Jamison White acted as a justice of the peace, the unfortunate Viola was finally ensnared. She dreamed of no wrong. Markley told her it was a common practice in America to observe secret weddings in such cases as theirs.

She began to doubt him for the first time when she found he did not keep his word about making the wedding public in a few weeks, as he had promised. Slowly it dawned upon her mind that Frederick Markley was not the Christian man he professed himself to be and which she had imagined he was. But she had no doubt of the legality of her marriage to him. She was insisting

on him keeping his promise about making the wedding public the evening that Dr. Anning heard them talking in the church.

"She was a guileless, innocent child," said her cruel betrayer, as he confessed to Allan. "She never dreamed of wrong. Sin was impossible to her. But I was blinded and maddened. I wanted to get rid of her. When we met at the railroad 'bend' I told her our marriage was a mock marriage, but she refused to believe it. 'In the sight of God, Frederick,' she sobbed to me, 'I am your wife.'

"She insisted on telling Dr. Anning the whole truth about our relations. I was desperate and I shot her. I did it with her father's gun, which I had borrowed from her some time previous on pretense that I wanted to see what Bohemian firearms were like. Life has been a hell to me ever since. Her last words have rung in my ears night and day. She said, 'Frederick, I forgive you.'"

Allan Rutledge looked steadfastly at the wretched man before him, as he told the story of his black life and awful crime. His dark eyes gleamed in fury as the hideous tragedy of ungoverned passion showed him the awful depths to which a man can fall, but not a word passed his lips.

"I swear to God," continued young Markley, quailing again under the steady glance of the minister's piercing eyes, "I swear to God I was not responsible. I did not know what I was doing."

"Frederick Markley," said the minister slowly, and his voice sounded hollow and strange, "you are guilty of crimes I had not believed to be pos-

sible, but I am not your judge. There is only one thing for you to do. Go to our county attorney and confess fully your crime to him, and give yourself up to justice, and may God have mercy on your soul."

"I cannot face it! Save me, Mr. Rutledge!" pleaded the son of Elder Markley.

"I cannot save you. You must surrender to justice. If you do not confess yourself, I must tell the officers."

"Have mercy! have mercy! Think of my father and mother, and my sister, Grace. Can I not begin life again somewhere else?"

His abject helplessness appealed to Allan Rutledge more than his words.

"I would help you if I could," responded the minister. "I do not forget your sister or your family, but I also remember Viola Antol and her family. I remember my duty as a man and as a citizen. I remember the law of God. You must deliver yourself over to the authorities."

"I cannot!" moaned the wretched man. "I will go anywhere, but I cannot endure a trial for Viola Antol's murder!"

"You must!" said Allan Rutledge gravely but decidedly. "I will wait until to-morrow noon. If you have not confessed your crime then to the officers, I shall lay this evidence before them," and he held up the postal-card and the note which Frank Antol had given him.

Frederick Markley shuddered, but made no reply. Deep down in his heart the minister had a great pity for the unfortunate young man. Like

Tito Melema, in the story of "Romola," Frederick Markley had gone down step by step until he had reached the lowest rung on the ladder of degradation and wickedness, yet he had begun his downward career wholly unconscious of its end. All he had desired was a pleasant time, and by simply living for pleasure he had made his life a horrible and almost unbelievable wreck, and had brought agony and torture to his nearest friends.

"Though I abhor your crime," said the minister, "I am sincerely sorry for you. You will find me your true friend. Make your peace with man by submitting to justice, and get right with God by giving him what is left of your life. Remain here alone for a while and think it all over. I will see you again to-morrow."

And Allan Rutledge passed out, leaving Frederick Markley alone in the officers' room in the church, the very room in which for over fifteen years Elder Markley had repressed every sincere effort on Dr. Anning's part to make the Wellington Church a real place of prayer and worship.

Justice had begun to demand its vengeance, and all Wellington was soon shuddering at the fearful price men must pay who defy the laws of God and man.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WAGES OF SIN.

When Allan Rutledge left the church, after hearing young Markley's confession, he went immediately to the Antol cottage. He found the entire family at home, sitting in stunned silence. Frank had told his father of his discovery when he returned home for dinner at noon and Mr. Antol did not go back to the factory.

As gently as he could, Allan told the family the whole tragedy of their daughter's life. He repeated, almost word for word, Frederick Markley's confession, including even Viola's last words.

Amid her tears Mrs. Antol told of her unshaken confidence in Viola and of her full assurance of her entire innocence of crime. "She was an angel, Mr. Rutledge. I wish you could have met her. She never dreamed of evil. She used to sing——" But the mother's emotion overpowered her, and Allan said tenderly: "She awaits you in the better world, where all earth's sorrows are healed."

Allan left them with the assurance that Viola's honor would be publicly vindicated and her wrongs requited by law.

That night he could not sleep. Until long after midnight he sat in his study reflecting over the

developments of that awful day. The bitterest thought of all was that Wellington Church was, in a measure, responsible for the tragedy. That the Church of God should thus be used in doing the work of hell was a fearful blow to his own faith.

Frederick Markley was the son of the leading officer in the church. He was a highly educated, cultured and wealthy young American. As the director of the church choir, and the leader of the young people in the church, it was no wonder that Viola was deceived. To her he was, at first, the embodiment of all that was best and most attractive in American life. His attentions to her flattered the maiden's heart and won her entire confidence.

Then the villian had unmasked himself. As Allan thought of young Markley, a supposed representative of the highest development of American civilization and Christianity, ensnaring, betraying and murdering the pure-minded, innocent, foreign girl, everything that was manly and noble in his nature roused him to a passion of indignation.

"Think of it!" he exclaimed aloud, as he arose and paced around his study. "Is Frederick Markley the final product of our boasted land of liberty? Does American success mean such renegades as this devil-possessed man proves himself to be? If so, I hate American civilization; I hate American Christianity. I prefer the savage wildness of the ignorant Hottentot to such hypocrisy and baseness."

Then the thought of Grace Markley, Frederick's

sister, came to his mind. What a contrast! A light broke over his face.

"I see it!" at last he exclaimed aloud. "Grace Markley, not her hapless brother, represents American civilization and American Christianity. Frederick reverted to the savage type. He stands not for the ripe, but for the rotten fruit of our institutions. I must not blame the sins of this modern Judas on our Christian churches."

"Joseph Cook, of Boston, was right," he went on, speaking aloud to himself, and finding a relief in utterance. "The curse of American Christianity to-day is the 'unhung Judas.' The base hypocrite betrays his Lord to-day and then keeps on in leadership in the Church. Judas Iscariot was manly enough to hang himself, and honest, God-fearing men, like Peter and John, were the early leaders of the Christian Church, but in America oftentimes some 'unhung Judas' lords it over the Christian people, and brings disgrace and shame on the entire Church."

Then, in the bitterness of his soul, he exclaimed: "What a blessing to the kingdom of Christ in America to-day if every Judas would follow the example of Iscariot and go and hang himself. The curse and pollution and weakness of our American church life would be at once removed."

It was almost morning when, utterly worn out with such disquieting and strange reasonings in his soul, the Wellington minister sought repose. But even in his sleep the tragic occurrences of the previous day pursued him. He dreamed he was in a ship, lost in a fog, on a stormy sea. Suddenly a

clanging of bells was heard telling of the fatal rocks close at hand, and before the course of the ship could be changed there was a crash.

He awoke with a start. The telephone bell was ringing loudly in the study. It rang again louder than ever. He arose as quickly as he could and partially dressed himself. A sudden fear clutched his heart as he took down the receiver of the telephone.

"This is Grace Markley," said a trembling voice. "Come to our house, quickly!"

That was all. Allan looked at his watch. It was just six o'clock. Day was beginning to break. Hastily finishing his dressing, he ran through the deserted streets to the Markley mansion. At the door Grace met him, and her face told the story. Wellington had another tragedy.

"Frederick is dead!" was all she could say, and she led the way upstairs to the young man's room.

There on the bed, on the top of the undisturbed bedclothes, lay the dead body of Frederick Markley. His life-blood, flowing from an awful wound in his head, had stained with its crimson red the snow-white bedspread. He was dressed exactly as when Allan had seen him last. Elder Markley was sitting, as in a stupor, on a chair by the side of the bed. Mrs. Markley was weeping hysterically as she hung helplessly over the brass rail at the foot.

As Allan looked around he saw a paper on the dressing table in front of the looking-glass. It proved to be the suicide's confession. Four words came to the young minister as the full meaning

of the tragic scene forced itself into his mind. As plainly as though printed in large, fiery letters he could read all over that room those four words. He saw them in the crimson life-blood, staining the bedclothes. He saw them in the blood-stained face of the former choir leader of the Wellington Church. He saw them on the dressing table, where young Markley's confession of sin lay. Over the pictures of the actresses which hung on the walls, on the floor, on the ceiling, Allan read everywhere—"The wages of sin."

"Oh, Frederick, my son, my son! Would God I had died for you! Oh, Frederick, my son, my son!"

Elder Markley's voice rose in a wail of despair as he uttered these words. The old heart-sob of David, the hapless father of Absalom, has been wrung from many a parent's lips since the time that the broken-hearted poet-king gave way to his natural grief.

At the sound of her husband's cry, Mrs. Markley screamed, and fell in a swoon over the foot of the bed. Grace Markley threw herself across the lifeless body of her brother in an agony of grief.

Allan Rutledge awoke out of his stunned helplessness. Servants were at the door and he motioned them to enter. With their help Mrs. Markley was carried into an adjoining room. Dr. Lucas, who arrived just as they were carrying her out of her son's room, gave one glance at Frederick, touched his cold hand, and then followed Mrs. Markley, applying restoratives. The sister was also gently removed, and Mr. Markley, walking like a man in a dream, was helped downstairs.

"He has been dead six hours at least," said Dr. Lucas to Allan. "Death was instantaneous. Is it not strange and terrible?"

"Terrible, but not strange, Dr. Lucas," answered the minister. "Poor Frederick sewed to the wind, and he has reaped the whirlwind." As he spoke, Allan pointed to the dead man's written confession, which lay on the dressing table. The doctor glanced it over and replied: "I saw the poor fellow go down the railroad track to the fatal bend just about dusk yesterday."

At the inquest the full facts of the tragedy came out. The honor of Viola Antol was vindicated, but all Wellington shuddered as they learned young Markley's story.

After Allan had left the young murderer at the church, Frederick Markley remained there alone for fully two hours. Then he went home, but spoke to no one, going to his own room. It was at this time he wrote out the confession he had left behind him. About dusk he went out again and went down the railroad tracks, evidently visiting again the place where Viola had met her fate. He came back home after all had retired for the night, but as the family was used to his irregular habits, no one thought anything about it. He had fired the fatal shot about midnight, launching his crimson-stained soul into eternity in a moment. No one heard the pistol discharged and the terrible deed was discovered first by Grace Markley.

Roused from sleep by a hideous dream in the early morn, she felt a feeling of alarm in her heart for her brother. Not knowing whether he had

returned home the previous night or not, she dressed herself and knocked at his door. There was no response. After a still louder knock, she walked in and there saw the tragedy. She at once roused the household and telephoned to Mr. Rutledge and the doctor.

The funeral of the young suicide was the saddest service that Allan Rutledge ever attended. The new president of the college, Dr. Shepherd, assisted the minister. Only the immediate friends of the family were present. Elder Markley, still stunned and helpless, did not seem to realize the circumstances. Mrs. Markley was completely broken in her grief. Poor Grace fainted dead away while the brief obituary was being read. As tenderly as they could both the minister and the college president commended the stricken family to the loving care of the heavenly Father, who "numbers even the hairs of our head," and who is "afflicted in all our afflictions." Allan gave a brief talk from the words: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Thus, in a suicide's grave, with the shadow of crime and the stain of sin on his memory, the son of the leading elder in the Wellington Church was laid away to await the resurrection of the just and unjust.

No son could have shown more tender attention to the stricken parents than Allan Rutledge did during the following weeks. He called at the Markley mansion almost daily. The entire family was prostrated and entirely unnerved by the tragedy. The first to recover herself was Grace,

whose Christian faith soon enabled her to bow before the providence of God, saying: "Not my will but thine be done." Allan thought at first that Elder Markley would not survive the shock. But time, the healer of so many wounds, gradually wrought its therapeutic wonders in the case of this stricken father. The young minister soon discovered, as Elder Markley began to rally, that he was a changed man. His entire outlook on life had altered. The old, greedy, selfish, covetous spirit was gone. To Allan's amazement and delight, Elder Markley grew more and more like his daughter, Grace. She was now his constant companion and his chief support. There was one result of young Markley's tragic end for which Wellington was thankful. A few days after the funeral Allan called on the county attorney, Clarkson Maynard. Mr. Maynard was one of the rising young politicians of the district, a brilliant lawyer and a sincere Christian man. He was a loyal and warm personal friend of Allan Rutledge, and through the college trouble Allan had no more ardent supporter than Clarkson Maynard.

"Mr. Maynard,' said the minister to the attorney, as he showed him young Markley's confession, "you will see there a most serious charge against Jamison White. What ought to be done about it?"

The county attorney at once read the confession carefully, and then responded: "I shall proceed at once to investigate. I have wondered where that fellow, White, got his money lately. He is a disgrace to the legal profession, as all the members of the Wellington Bar have felt for some time."

But Jamison White heard in some way that the officers of justice were on his trail, and the next day he left Wellington for good. He was never heard of again. "A good riddance!" was the universal comment when his disappearance became known to the public, and if he is hereafter ever found, there may be legal proceedings in his case that will greatly interest the public, and which without doubt, will land the unprincipled young lawyer remorselessly in a convict's cell.

It was several months after this that Grace Markley telephoned one day to Allan Rutledge, saying that her father wanted to see him on some important business matter. The young minister at once started for the Markley home, and found Elder Markley in a better state of mind than he had ever seen him before. He was almost cheerful and happy in his cordial greetings. As Elder Markley went on to speak of the business matter on which he wished to consult with Allan, the young minister was astonished, and ever afterward he saw in this interview a new proof that nothing is impossible with God, and that even in such terrible calamities for those who believe in Him, it will be found at last that the Scriptures are true, and that "all things work together for good."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BROKEN-HEARTED AND PENITENT.

"I say, Pat, why are you in such a hurry with that job? You remind me of a candidate running for a county office."

Foreman McGregor smiled as he addressed Pat McGinnis one day in this way in the paint shop of the Markley factory. The Irishman was painting a large wheel, and he was making the brush fly wildly over the spokes, his arm working like the piston rod of an engine.

"Faith, now," he replied, "I have this big wheel to paint, and only a drap o' paint in me bucket and I'm hurrin' up to get through before the paint gives out."

"Vell, vell, he iss an Irishman, sure ting," ejaculated Jake Borner, the little Dutchman as all the men in the paint shop roared with laughter.

"I say, Pat," went on McGregor, "would you work as hard as that if you were working for yourself?"

"Begorra, I don't know, but when I work for meself at meal time I always work pretty hard."

"Well, the boss is going to have us work for ourselves after this," said McGregor.

"What's that?" asked the men questioningly, stopping in their work and looking at the foreman.

Mr. Antol was presiding at the dipping vat that morning, and he stopped his work in astonishment, holding a bundle of irons, dripping with paint, in his hands.

"Yes, he wants us all to meet him to-day at half-past twelve in the shipping room, and he is going to set us all working for ourselves."

"What does the boss mean by that?" asked McGinnis.

Just then the noon whistle blew, and the foreman said, "Come back promptly at 12:30 and you will hear all about it."

The men departed for the midday meal, wondering what was going to happen.

This meeting of Markley's workmen, which was called at the noon hour that day was the final result of the conferences which Allan Rutledge had with Elder Markley. On that occasion when Allan had taken his seat, after the cordial greetings by the factory owner, the minister was amazed to hear him say, "Mr. Rutledge, I have asked you here to consult with you about putting my factory on a Christian basis."

"Yes, sir," continued Elder Markley. "Since I have begun to recover from the shock of my son's death, my dear daughter, Grace, has been devoting herself to me, and she has read over to me the four Gospels in our New Testament. I never knew before what Christianity was. I begin to see that your preaching is exactly the preaching the New Testament demands of every honest minister."

"I feel to-day like Zacchaeus when Jesus came

into his home and said, 'This day hath salvation come to thine house'" went on Mr. Markley, to the astonished minister, "and I feel like saying, as Zacchaeus did, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.'"

"I rejoice with you that you have found Jesus Christ," said Allan earnestly. "He always brings salvation."

After a pause, Elder Markley went on to state that he desired to make some more adequate and just division of the profits of his factory.

"I see clearly," said the penitent employer, "that I have kept all the cream to myself, and given my men nothing but skimmed milk. I want you to help me work out some plan that will do justice to my workmen."

Allan was delighted. He saw the factory owner's problem, and he was prepared to help him intelligently. He had been reading some articles by Andrew Carnegie on "Labor and Capital," and he had been impressed with the arguments of this successful Scotchman on behalf of co-partnership between employers and employees. The plan appealed to Allan's sense of justice, and he knew that Mr. Carnegie was a successful man of affairs.

"Turn your business into a stock company, he explained to Mr. Markley, "and give some of the stock to each of your men. This makes them partners with you, and you all share equally in the profits of the business. Besides making a just division of the profits possible, such an arrangement will make each of your men proudly conscious that he is working in his own factory. It

will mean new life to your employees and will be an object lesson to the business world."

As Allan had studied this entire question, he was able to refer to other business men who had adopted this plan, and who found that it worked successfully. Elder Markley was interested and agreed to work out some such scheme. Accordingly, after taking the necessary legal steps, he had organized a stock company to own and operate his factory, and he arranged to distribute part of the stock among his old employees.

In order to make requittal, in some way, to Mr. Frisbie and Frank Antol for the injury done to them by his hapless son, Mr. Markley decided to divide a certain per cent. of the stock between them, making Mr. Frisbie the general manager of the factory and Frank Antol the assistant manager. In spite of his youth Frank had shown himself a remarkably capable young business man. He retained a just share of the stock for himself and his family.

The balance of the stock Mr. Markley decided to distribute among the men, giving several shares to each employee. The noon-day meeting, of which Foreman McGregor spoke, was the occasion on which Elder Markley was to distribute the shares of stock among the men. There had been a previous conference with the foremen, but the men knew nothing of these proposed changes.

There was a feeling of anxiety on the part of the men. Most of them thought that the factory was to be shut down on account of Mr. Markley's ill health. At 12:30 all were gathered in the ship-

ping room. Elder Markley, looking old and feeble, appeared, leaning heavily on Allan Rutledge's arm.

The minister called the meeting together and made a short introductory speech. He said that Mr. Markley had something to say which he knew would please them all very much. The factory owner arose to speak. He looked over the sea of eager faces and a tear glistened in his eyes.

"My brothers," he said at last to the amazed workmen, "I am not a speaker. I cannot give you any address, but I want to thank you all for your good work in the factory, especially during the past year. Times are good. The factory is paying better than ever, and I want to take in some partners. I have arranged to take you all in as partners with me and the foremen will now distribute to you shares of stock in the Wellington Manufacturing Company. There are five shares of stock for each of you. This company will own and operate the factory. Mr. Frisbie is the general manager and Frank Antol is his assistant."

The men were too dazed to say a word, and the different foremen began to hand out the stock certificates, which had all been previously prepared. Allan arose in the tense silence, which was only broken by the rustling of the certificates as they were being handed out. The minister held a certificate of stock in his own hand.

"Fellow-partners in the Wellington Manufacturing Company, he began, "our kind benefactor, Mr. Markley, has asked me to accept a few shares of stock along with you. I am sure you all appreciate this act of his in making you fellow-owners with

him of this splendid factory. Henceforth you will work for yourselves, as you will all own the factory together. Mr. Markley has turned part of the stock over to you. I trust that your diligent attention to business will show to Mr. Markley and to the community that you are a company of men who can be trusted with the ownership of property."

The men now began slowly to realize their good fortune. Mr. Steen jumped up and shouted, "Three cheers for our boss, Mr. Markley!" He led them in the English cheer, and three tremendous "Hip-hip-hurrahs!" rent the air.

Foreman McGregor then arose on behalf of the men and thanked Mr. Markley for his generous action. "This means a new epoch in the life of every employee in this factory," he exclaimed. "We are no longer 'hands.' We are men, and I feel sure we will be able to show ourselves to be men, and capable of owning capital, just as our fathers proved themselves to be capable of enjoying liberty. We have long had democracy in politics. Industrial democracy is now a fact in Wellington and Mr. Markley will long be remembered as the man who made this possible."

When McGregor ceased there was wild applause from the men, showing he had accurately voiced their sentiments.

Tears were flowing down the cheeks of Elder Markley as he arose again. "I am not entitled to any thanks, my friends," he said simply. "I have lately seen what a failure my whole life has been. I lived only for myself, but, as you all know, a terrible calamity has overtaken me and——"

Here Mr. Markley was compelled to pause, his emotion being too great to allow him to continue. There was not a dry eye in the crowd. Poor Mr. Antol bowed himself in his grief, and the fountain of his own tears was opened.

"I am learning now from our great Teacher how to live," he went on, as soon as he could recover his speech. "If what I have done has encouraged any of you, the thanks are due to our Saviour. May God bless you all."

The strange meeting was over. Every man came forward to grasp Mr. Markley's hand. It was a new experience with the factory owner, and he was astonished at the joy he found in his heart, as these horny-fisted men of toil greeted him, one after the other, with a warm handshake. He had at last "learned the luxury of doing good." All that afternoon the foremen were busy assuring the men that the stock certificates meant a partnership in the business and explaining how the dividends on the stock would be paid semi-annually out of the profits. All the men were jubilant.

When Pat McGinnis went home that night his wife thought he had taken leave of his senses. He kissed his wife's rosy cheek and bowed before her, saying: "An' how is me lady to-night?" Then he caught up the baby out of the cradle and tossed the little fellow in the air. "Shure, it's the son of a gintlemen you are!" he exclaimed, as he laid the startled baby back in the cradle again. "Sarah, I'm in business for meself now," at last he ventured to explain to his wife, who was losing all patience with her rollicking spouse.

"What's the matter with you, Pat, at all, at all?" she exclaimed. "Have ye lost your wits entoirely?"

Pat drew forth his stock certificate, and showed it proudly to his better half. When she understood what it meant she was overjoyed. It was not the actual value of the stock certificate that made the men so happy. It was the thought that now, in a measure, they were the fellow-owners of the factory.

In a hundred homes in Wellington that night there was thanksgiving to God, and a new sense of independence, and a fresh joy and hope. But Elder Markley's benevolence was not exhausted in his gifts of stock certificates to his employees.

At a called meeting of the officers of the Wellington Church, he offered to present to the congregation a new pipe-organ, and to put in a much needed gallery in the church building at his own expense. He also agreed, if the church would build a suitable residence for the minister, to give one-half of the amount necessary. An arrangement was made at once to accept his generous offers.

"What does it all mean?" asked Deacon Stanford of Allan Rutledge, as they walked home together after this meeting.

"It means that Grace Markley has led her father to accept the teaching of the New Testament in regard to property," responded the minister. "Sociological problems and all financial difficulties in the Church disappear when men like Markley become real Christians. The shock of his son's death broke his stubborn will, and his daughter has

led him into the light. He is a new man altogether."

"But what's the use of building a fine residence for our minister?" said the deacon a little later. "He seems determined to live a single life. Why don't you get married, Mr. Rutledge?"

It was well it was dark, so that the good deacon did not see the look of pain that passed over the minister's face as he was asked this question.

"My life is lonely, I admit," he answered gravely, "but my time is fully occupied, and the pleasures of home life seem to be denied me. I am trying to devote myself entirely to my life mission."

Yes, Allan Rutledge was honestly trying to do this, but often a weariness and loneliness overcame him, and his thoughts fled across the sea, in spite of all he could do, to a happy tourist party which was enjoying the delights of a European trip. Amid his splendid success and remarkable ministry in Wellington his own heart was still uncheered and he often bitterly felt that he had been defeated in one vital instance in his battles with life. Do what he might he could not crush out of his heart the longing he had to see and hear Mabel Grayson again.

"Do you ever hear from Mabel?" he asked Grace Markley one day, when he called at her home to see her father and found Grace alone. It was the first time he had mentioned Mabel to her since that day, months before, when she had spoken to him of his mission in life.

"Not very regularly," she replied. "She wrote me a beautiful letter when she first heard of our

sorrow, and she has sent me a few postal cards, but she has not written much."

"The party must be on their way home through Europe now," said Allan.

"Yes, I think they are now in England. I am going to take a long journey myself after a while." And Grace Markley blushed shyly, as she went on: "I was wanting to see you, Mr. Rutledge, and have a talk with you. Do you remember Lester Gray?"

"Certainly," replied Allan. "I remember him well. He is a fine fellow, and I hear he is a Student Volunteer."

"He is going as a missionary to Korea next fall and——" here Grace hesitated a moment before she went on—"and I am going with him. Papa has consented and he is going to undertake Lester's support, and make him the missionary pastor of the Wellington Church."

"I congratulate you most sincerely," exclaimed the minister. "Yours is a noble lifework. There is nothing grander on earth. How happy both of you will be! What are your father and mother going to do?"

"They will accompany us to Korea and see our station there, and then they plan to return to America and live in California, as they can be nearer to us. We talked it all over last night, and both papa and mamma are willing that I should go to Korea as Lester's wife. We have been engaged for some time, but I did not tell anyone except mamma, as I was afraid papa would never consent to my becoming a missionary."

"How changed your father is in everything,"

remarked the minister. "I would not know him to be the same man."

"He is not the same man," answered Grace Markley earnestly. "He died when Frederick died, and the life my father now lives is a different life altogether."

"We can all see it," responded Allan. "Why, here comes your father up the walk!" he added, looking out of the window.

"I wish to congratulate you, sir," said Allan, after the cordial greetings were over. "Your daughter has been telling me of her plans. I am delighted to know of her noble lifework. Iowa has given several of her most accomplished young women to missionary work in recent years. Grace tells me that you and Mrs. Markley are to accompany them out to Korea when they sail."

"Yes," replied Elder Markley. "I think the trip will do us both good. Wellington has bitter memories for us, and we think if we take an ocean voyage and then make our home in California, perhaps we can in part, overcome the sorrow that has blighted our lives. But I shall not cease to be interested in Wellington," he added, looking earnestly at Allan Rutledge. "I owe you a great deal, sir, and I want you to allow me to repay you somewhat."

"What do you owe me?" asked Allan in surprise.

"I owe you more than I can ever repay," he replied, "but I want you to accept from me a two months' trip to Europe as a holiday. I can see that the awful burden of recent months has worn

you down. You need a good rest. I have arranged with the officers of the church to have President Shepherd supply the pulpit for two months and you can take a much needed rest. When can you start?"

Mr. Markley would take no refusal and the arrangements for Allan's trip to Europe were soon completed. In two weeks' time he was on the Atlantic Ocean, bound for Queenstown, as he desired to spend a few days first in Ireland.

On this voyage of five days—for the ocean liners leap through the water nowadays—the young minister of Wellington reviewed his battles and victories.

"Alas!" he sighed one day, as he sat on the deck, his eyes sweeping the billowy deep, "if only I could succeed as Lester Gray has succeeded. But I am still in defeat. My external enemies have all been vanquished, but my heart is bleeding and broken, and my case seems hopeless."

CHAPTER XXIX.

AT THE LAKES OF KILLARNEY.

Landing at Queenstown, Ireland, Allan Rutledge spent a day visiting Cork and the famous Blarney Castle, which is five miles from Cork. He then proceeded to the world-renowned Lakes of Killarney. These three lovely lakes are situated in the mountains of Kerry, in southern Ireland, and make a rare panorama of scenic beauty. Arriving at the village of Killarney, Allan hired an Irish jaunting car, and drove around the magnificent boulevards of Kenmare Park, which skirts the lakes. In the afternoon he decided to visit the island of Innisfallen, which is the largest of the sixty islands which float in the charmed Killarney waters. This island has been called "the beautiful miniature of a beautiful country," and, although only twenty-one acres in extent, it is one of the most delightful spots in all the world. The Irish poet, Thomas Moore, has immortalized the little isle in his song, "Sweet Innisfallen, Fare Thee Well." As his boatman rowed alongside of the island, Allan heard voices and knew that some other tourists were enjoying themselves on the island. Anxious to be alone, he requested the boatman to row over to the opposite side of the

island, and there he landed in a quiet, shady nook. The boatman sat idly in his little craft, and Allan climbed up on the bank and walked a short distance into the interior of the isle. He was charmed with its sylvan beauty. The day was perfect, and the blue sky above rivaled the laughing blue waters of the lakes. The checkered shade of the trees made a scene of quiet peacefulness that soothed the restless spirit of the Wellington minister. As he was wandering on he suddenly stopped. A few steps in front of him, seated at the foot of a large tree, was a young lady; evidently one of the tourist party who had strayed away to enjoy the scenery alone. She was seated with her back to Allan, apparently in deep meditation. Allan stepped on a twig just as he stopped, and there was a snap as it broke under his foot. In the silence it sounded like the report of a pistol. The young lady hastily turned and Allan Rutledge gave a shout: "Mabel Grayson!" he cried, leaping forward. "Allan Rutledge!" she exclaimed, equally astonished.

"I was wondering if I would not run across you in Ireland," said Allan, after the first greetings were over. Allan had noticed the sincere joy that his presence had given Mabel. "Grace told me you were probably in Ireland by this time."

"Where is Grace?" said Mabel, looking around in some confusion.

"Grace?" echoed Allan in amazement.

"Yes, is not Grace with you?"

"Why, no. What do you mean? Why should Grace be with me?"

"Why, I thought——" began Mabel, and then she stopped in confusion, blushing deeply.

"Explain yourself," said Allan.

"Did you come away and leave Grace?" Mabel asked, trying to appear natural, but hardly knowing just what she was saying.

"I left her in good hands. Lester Gray was in Wellington when I bade them good-bye about a week ago."

"Lester Gray! Who is he?"

"Did you not know that Grace Markley was engaged to Lester Gray? He is a former student of Wellington College, and a fine fellow. They are to be married in June, and they sail for Korea as missionaries in the fall. Mr. and Mrs. Markley will accompany them."

Mabel Grayson could not speak. Her eyes showed her amazement, and Allan quietly sat down beside her. He was beginning to understand the situation.

"Did you think," he said at last, "that Grace was engaged to me?" Still Mabel was silent. Her head was in a whirl.

"Mabel," Allan went on, encouraged by her blushes and confusion, "I think that I am beginning to understand. You imagined that I belonged to Grace Markley. I have belonged to you, and to you alone, ever since that graduation day in Des Moines."

Mabel Grayson sat looking straight before her. She seemed in a kind of entrancing dream.

"Can I ever hope"—Allan's voice was low and tender, and he leaned over until his dark locks al-

most mingled with the golden tresses of Judge Grayson's daughter—"can I ever hope that you will belong to me? I love you, Mabel!"

The electric spark had flashed. The two separate elements were apart no longer. Boundary walls were broken down and the hearts of Allan Rutledge and Mabel Grayson flowed together like water. After the first fond embrace and the sacred kiss that sealed their relationship as lovers forevermore, Mabel spoke: "I am so happy, Allan. I have been miserable all through this trip because I could not forget you."

"My long, long life dream is now a reality," responded Allan, "I am so happy that I am afraid I will wake up and find it was only a dream."

"If the rest of the party find us, you will soon find out it is no dream," Mabel answered, looking around. "I must join them again. We have had an interesting trip, but I shall always remember 'sweet Innisfallen' as the happiest spot in all Europe."

"To me it will always be the dearest spot on earth," responded Allan, as he arose to his feet. "I will be glad to see your father again. Do you think he will object when he finds out what we have been doing?"

"No, indeed!" answered Mabel. "He has always admired you, and he would prefer to see me a minister's wife, I believe, rather than see me the wife of the President of the United States. You know yourself how highly he regards the ministers of the Gospel."

"Your father is a man and a Christian," said

Allan, with enthusiasm. Even as they were speaking, Allan and Mabel emerged into the open space around the ancient ruins of Innisfallen Abbey, and Judge Grayson caught sight of them. He rushed forward at once, exclaiming: "Why, I declare, if here isn't Allan Rutledge, the hero of Iowa!"

Allan hastened to explain his presence, adding as he looked meaningly at Mabel: "I think I can be called the hero of Innisfallen after this."

The beautiful daughter of the Judge blushed, and coming up to her father, she put her arms around his neck. The Judge knew what it meant. "God bless you, my children," he said simply.

Allan Rutledge felt that his cup of happiness was full to overflowing. The rest of the party gathered around and they were soon all introduced to the young minister. They greeted him cordially, with the exception of one young man, who was introduced as "Walker Weldman." When Judge Grayson introduced Allan to him as "Rev. Allan Rutledge," the young fellow shook hands with a patronizing air that Allan at once noticed. Weldman reminded him of Frederick Markley and he found out later that Weldman was, in many ways, a kind of second Frederick Markley, and that he had been a thorn in the flesh to Mabel and her father during the trip. He was the son of wealthy parents, of unsettled habits and principles, skeptical and agnostic in his religious beliefs.

Mabel afterward told Allan that her father and Weldman had had many warm discussions about Christianity, and that her father was disgusted

with the young fellow's sneering references to ministers and the Church in general.

"Poor fellow!" said Allan. "Such men need our sympathy. I often think I was too harsh with Frederick Markley. I took him too seriously. I could tell at once, when I met him, that Walker Weldman had no strength of character. Unless he is converted, some such fate as that of Frederick Markley will surely overtake him."

"He has been a nuisance to me all the trip," said Mabel. "He persisted in paying attentions to me until I had to tell him plainly that his presence was annoying."

Judge Grayson and Allan had several long conversations together. The Judge was very much interested in the change that had come over the life of his kinsman, Elder Markley.

"Mr. Markley had a good home training as a boy," said the Judge. "I remember well his old home in Pennsylvania. But all his life until now he has allowed the world to crowd out God, and it has been a terrible mistake. He has paid dearly for his error."

With the sole exception of Weldman, the whole party was delighted with the addition of Allan Rutledge to the tourist party. As Allan had previously visited Killarney, he was able to point out the interesting features of the various "sights" in the neighborhood. The day after Allan joined the party, a trip was made to Muckross Abbey, an old ruin which dates back to 1440. On this trip they could see to good advantage the towering mountains which overshadow the lakes. One of

these mountains has a flat top, and it attracted Mabel's attention. "What a peculiar top that mountain has!" she exclaimed, pointing to it.

"That is the Devil's Punch Bowl," responded Allan. "It formerly was a volcano, but it burned itself out long ago. There is now a deep lake of pure, spring water in the crater, and they pipe this water to the village of Killarney. The peak is over 2,600 feet high."

After exploring Killarney for three days, the tourists began to think of home.

"This finishes our trip," said Judge Grayson to Allan, "and as you have only begun your tour I expect you will leave us."

"Not at all," replied Allan. "I am well satisfied with my trip and I am quite ready to escort you all back home to America again. I have enjoyed my week's travel more than some people do an entire year in sightseeing."

"I think," said her father, with a smile, "some of us have been more charmed at Killarney than anywhere else in Europe."

Accordingly, they all embarked on their homeward voyage at Queenstown. About this voyage Allan's only regret was that they did not take passage on a slow-going sailing vessel, so that it might have lasted six weeks instead of six days. Both Mabel and Allan were good sailors, and they sat out on the deck, talking together and planning for the future.

"The beautiful and commodious residence for the minister in Wellington will be completed in August," said Allan one day. "I can have it fur-

nished and ready for its queen early in September. Will that be too soon?" he asked.

"I am afraid you are trying to hurry me," replied Mabel, with a smile. "Had we not better wait until midwinter?"

"I cannot wait," he replied. "I will never be able to settle down to do any work until you are with me. My thoughts will be wandering to Des Moines in spite of myself."

And so it was all arranged.

There was one unpleasant incident during the voyage. When Walker Weldman found out that the young minister had won the heart of the fair Mabel Grayson, and as he saw her devotion to him, he was furious, and several times came very near insulting Allan by his references to "fool preachers."

One day at dinner Allan was seated opposite Weldman, and the conversation turned on the Holy Land.

"Most of the sites pointed out to tourists in Palestine are frauds," said Weldman, "but that is just what you might expect."

"Why should we expect falsehood in the land where Christ lived?" asked Allan quietly.

"Religion is mostly fraud everywhere," Weldman answered, with a sneer.

"You mistake, sir," responded Allan quickly. "In the Christian religion there is no fraud whatever."

"Preachers have to say that, of course," sneered Weldman, in reply.

"Every intelligent man who has investigated and tested Christianity says so, unless his life is

crooked, in which case a test of Christianity is impossible," said the minister warmly.

This reference to a "crooked life" touched young Weldman, for his character was openly full of serious flaws.

"The practical men of America have no use for churches or preachers," he responded in an insulting manner.

"What's this discussion about?" said Judge Grayson at this point, turning to the two young men.

Allan at once repeated the insulting remark of Weldman.

"You are much mistaken, sir!" replied the Judge severely, addressing himself to Weldman. "I want to tell you, sir, that you have foully slandered the practical men of America. They are not godless, as you say. Andrew Jackson, our great President, was one of the practical men of our country. He called the Bible the 'Rock on which the Republic was built.' General Grant urged the people of America to 'cling to the Bible.' He called it the 'sheet anchor of our liberties.' When President McKinley died a Christian death, saying, 'It is God's way, not ours. His will be done,' he showed all the world his faith in our holy religion.

"The leading men in America to-day," went on the Judge, to the discomfited Weldman, "the men who are our real patriots and who are opposing the evils which blight our American civilization, are practically all Christian men, and the ministers of the Christian Church are the leaders in everything that is best and highest in our American life.

"I wish that you could hear President Roosevelt preach some time," the Judge concluded, "or that you could listen to William Jennings Bryan speak on the subject of religion, and you would never again slander the fair name of Christian America and its leading men by calling them godless."

Judge Grayson spoke so earnestly and with such conviction that the sneering skeptic was silenced. After that rebuke by the Judge, Walker Weldman treated Allan more respectfully, and before the voyage was over the minister had broken down some of the prejudice with which Weldman regarded the teachers of religion. One day Allan related to him the tragic story of Frederick Markley. It made a great impression on Weldman, and Allan hoped it would eventually lead to a change in his life and belief.

When the liner arrived at New York, Allan bade Mabel and the rest of the party good-bye, as he desired to make a visit in Boston and some other Eastern cities.

He called on his old professor, Dr. Augustus Beard, and found rather a chilly reception awaiting him. After Allan explained to the professor of theology how Wellington Church and college were flourishing as never before, the old professor thawed out a little, but Allan could plainly see that Dr. Beard was in sympathy with the ecclesiastical "machine" in Iowa, which had been so sadly disorganized by the Wellington minister's aggressive Christianity. From Boston Allan went to Washington, D. C., and spent a delightful week in the Capitol city.

Through his friend, Senator Dolliver, he was admitted to an interview with President Roosevelt, and he had a delightful chat with this foremost American. The strenuous President showed the deepest interest in the moral and religious outlook in the Middle West, and declared that a spiritual awakening was the most vital need of our times.

Climbing to the top of the dome of the National Capitol building, Allan surveyed with a beating heart the beautiful Capitol city of America. As he gazed upon the magnificent public buildings, Washington Monument, the old Lee mansion in the distance, the wooded parks and broad boulevardes of the splendid metropolis, and as he remembered that this magnificent city was the official home of his country, his heart swelled with patriotic pride, and he thanked God for the great Western nation, whose flag is the emblem of freedom, righteousness and humanity.

"Beautiful land of the Stars and Stripes!" he exclaimed aloud.

"Banner of Freedom; long may you wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

After a few more weeks of rest, spent in the Alleghany Mountains, Allan Rutledge turned his face once more toward Iowa.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE VICTORY OF ALLAN RUTLEDGE.

"Wellington! Wellington!" shouted the conductor, as the fast Chicago Express thundered into that Iowa town, bearing the returning minister home again.

A great crowd thronged the platform of the station.

"There he is!" cried a number of voices, as Allan Rutledge, radiant and happy, appeared on the platform of one of the Pullman palace cars, his suit case in hand. As he stepped to the ground Deacon Stanford met him.

"Welcome home, Mr. Rutledge! You look like a new man again."

"And I feel like a prince," replied the minister.

"We are so glad to see you back with us again," said his many friends, greeting him with a hearty handshake.

"This is home," said Allan to Deacon Stanford, when they drove away together. "I am delighted to be back among my own people in Wellington."

"As far as I can see," replied Deacon Stanford, "there is only one thing that is wrong, and that is that no one seems to be 'kicking.' But the good Lord has given you the complete victory."

"He surely has," responded Allan, and the minister confided in the deacon his victory on Innisfallen Island.

"Glorious! glorious!" almost shouted Deacon Stanford. "Mabel Grayson will be a worthy mistress of the splendid house we are building for you. You ought to see it. It will be one of the finest residences in town. Elder Markley has superintended most of the work himself, and he says that nothing is too good. It will be a house fit for the ambassador of Christ to live in."

That night they gave Allan a "welcome home reception" at the church. While he was away the new pipe-organ had been installed, and a gallery erected, and the entire church overhauled.

Allan was in the highest spirits. As he mingled with the people he was delighted to greet many in whom he was greatly interested and whom he observed with joy remaining steadfast in the faith. Mr. Steen was there that night, contented and happy. His little daughter, Marjorie, had a part on the program, singing with her marvelous voice the appropriate song, "Home Sweet Home." Mrs. Frisbie was there, still showing visible signs on her face of the agony of her soul in its rebirth, but gentle and cheerful. The men from the factory were present, now proud fellow-partners in the Wellington Manufacturing Company, each of them with the air of a prosperous business man.

Elder Markley and his wife were present, still sad looking, but greeting all with a kindly smile. Grace Markley had a little talk with Allan during the evening, and he confided to her also his success

on the lovely island of Innisfallen. She was overjoyed, hardly believing it possible, and warmly congratulated the minister. Richard Rutledge, Allan's brother, who had now become one of the leaders among the college boys, was there, surrounded by a large crowd of the students. They gave their college yell with characteristic vigor, and the roof of the reception parlor rang with their "'rah-'rah-'rahs."

Altogether the reception was unanimous and cordial to a degree that surprised even Deacon Stanford. Toward the close of the evening the deacon stepped forward and made a little talk to the gathering, presenting Allan with a handsome gold watch and chain.

"You have had a good time while you were away from us," said the genial deacon, "and we want you to have a 'good time' from now on in Wellington," and he handed the watch to the surprised minister. In his response Allan Rutledge spoke with much feeling of his appreciation of the beautiful gift.

"I will always carry this watch," he said earnestly. "It will ever remind me of your loyalty and love. I am proud to be the minister of such a congregation as the Wellington Church. I find that our work here is creating interest in all parts of the country, and we are showing discouraged ministers and churches that the Gospel of Christ is still the power of God unto salvation." After Allan sat down, Doctor Shepherd, the new president of the Wellington College, arose, and in a few well chosen words he pledged the cordial support

of that institution to all the efforts made by the Wellington Church to extend Christ's kingdom on earth.

"Our mission is great and glorious!" he exclaimed. "Here is our mission and here is the pledge of our success," and he held up one of the souvenir cards which had been given to all who were present. On these cards were printed a picture of the Wellington Church, and underneath the church were printed these words:

"Our Mission—The Extension of Christ's Kingdom on Earth; Our Pledge of Victory—The Word of God."

The reception was ended by singing together a verse of the hymn, "Like a Mighty Army Moves the Church of God."

Deacon Stanford and Allan walked home together, as was their custom. "My work in Wellington is only beginning," said the minister. "All this rough, preparatory work, which has been necessary, and in which I have been hitherto engaged, was like the work of the pioneer woodsman. I have been simply making a clearing so that the real work of the church could begin. We have now, for the first time, an opportunity to go forward, as Christ's followers, and take this entire community for God, and do our part to extend his kingdom in the world."

As soon as he could get away for a few days, Allan hastened to Des Moines. He was welcomed to Judge Grayson's home by Mabel herself, who opened the door as he came up the steps, exclaiming: "Have you run away from Wellington again

so soon? You are not looking after your flock very faithfully."

"I am like a man trying to serve two masters," replied Allan smilingly, as he greeted her cordially, "but I hope too to be able to say, 'Now rest, my long divided heart.'"

When they were seated in the parlor Allan told her all about the reception at Wellington and showed her the watch. He also spoke of the new residence for the minister, which was to be one of the finest homes in Wellington.

"I am sure all its arrangements will please you," he said, as he described its completeness.

"I am afraid," said Mabel shyly, "that I am hardly worthy to be a minister's wife."

"You are worthy to be the wife of an emperor," responded Allan enthusiastically; "and yet," he added seriously, "I think a minister's life is of a higher order than even an emperor's. It's because I am counted worthy to be an ambassador of Christ that I have dared to aspire to the hand of Judge Grayson's daughter."

That afternoon they visited the State Capitol building, which crowns a gentle eminence overlooking the Des Moines River. As they climbed the long stairways leading to the top of the dome, Allan told of his recent experience in Washington, and how moved he was at the sight of the capitol city of his country. They stood together on the top of the dome of the Iowa State Capitol, and surveyed the panorama beneath. The growing city of Des Moines stretched out on every side. The winding river, spanned by many a bridge, flowed

majestically through the city, and out across the fertile plains. Away in the distance they could see the broad acres of rich soil that make Iowa the finest agricultural State in the Union.

They gazed awhile in silence, and then Allan spoke. "What a grand picture of possibilities that is! Here in this prosperous land God is about to rear the noblest society this earth has even seen. I am proud of Iowa. I am proud of the Middle West."

And Mabel Grayson answered, "All that is needed to make your dream for this land come true is the Americanization and Christianization of its people."

"With you by my side," responded Allan, "I dedicate my life to the building up of God's kingdom in this glorious Middle West." And they went down from the dome together, happy in their mutual love, both of them thrilled with the same grand ambition. The victory of Allan Rutledge was complete!

(The End.)